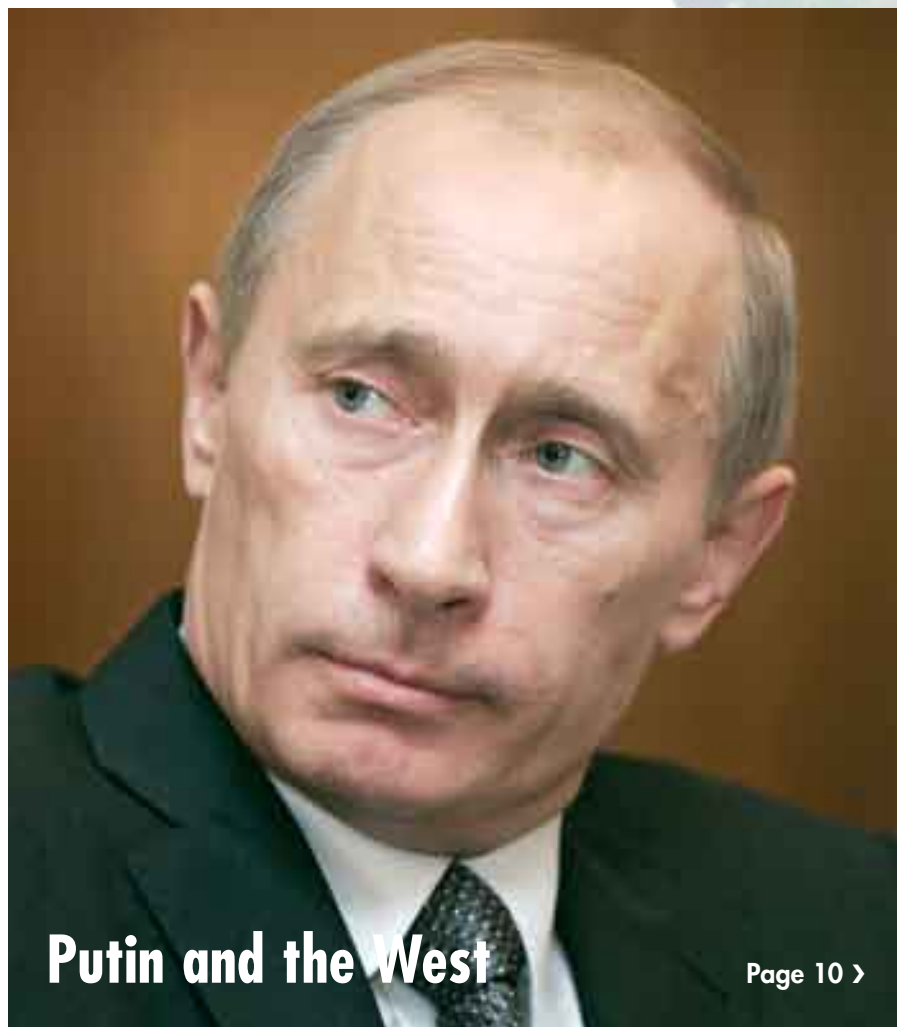


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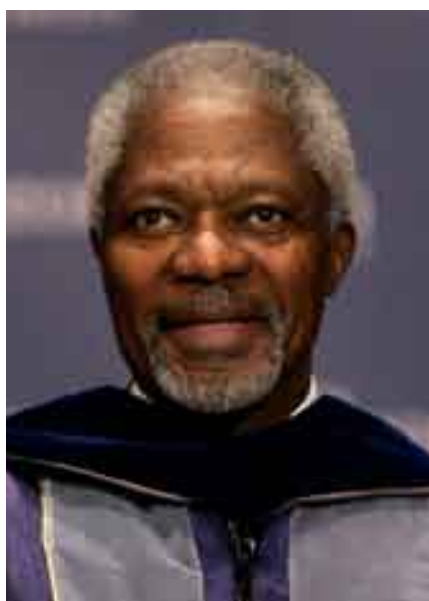
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Countries must act now to protect the world's climate

Kaire M Mbuende

THERE is an urgent need for the governments of developed and developing countries, intergovernmental organisations, multilateral agencies, academia, non-government organisations, and civil society at large to assume responsibility for protecting the world's climate, particularly after the release of the latest reports of the three working groups of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The IPCC has put the dispute over the reality of climate change to rest for once and for all. It has not only established that climate change is a fact of life, but has also conclusively identified its main contributing factors. The IPCC's findings corroborate the premises of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as well as the Kyoto Protocol.

The reality of climate change

Climate change is not something that is going to happen over the next 50 years or so – it is a present-day reality. The frequent droughts, intense rains, floods, melting glaciers, rising sea levels, and hurricanes we are witnessing today are interrelated phenomena, and the result of global warming and climate change. While the world's climates also fluctuate naturally, this is not as significant as those human activities over the past century that have contributed to the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, causing global warming.

The present system of production and consumption, particularly in the industrialised countries, based on high levels of energy consumption that result in the emission of greenhouse gases, is unsustainable. If this trend continues unabated, it will lead to irremediable natural disasters which will create conditions similar to the aftermath of a nuclear war. There is thus an urgent need to stop the process of human self-annihilation by protecting the climate.

The UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol are the only instruments at the disposal of governments for protecting the world's climate. Member states have undertaken to protect the world's climate for present and future generations. This undertaking has been made on the basis of asymmetry – in other words, common but differentiated responsibilities. It is recognised that the industrialised countries are responsible for the bulk of the greenhouse gas emissions. Secondly, there is an awareness that developing and developed countries have different needs and responsibilities. As a result, developed countries have been expected, and have undertaken, to take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Unfortunately, none of the countries have met their targets, and the levels of carbon dioxide emissions have continued to increase year on year. Furthermore, the US, one of the largest emitters, did not sign the Kyoto Protocol, and did not agree to the target set for the reduction of greenhouse gases. Until recently, the US administration questioned the protocol's scientific basis and economic efficacy.

Industries in developed countries have argued that the cost of implementing the Kyoto Protocol is too high. Instead of making modest efforts to restructure their industries, some companies have spent millions of dollars on 'scientific research' aimed at proving that climate change is not taking place. Industries should realise that the cost of doing nothing about climate change will eventually be much higher than the additional investments required to change production and consumption patterns, as there will be no earth to do business on. At the same time, their production systems are threatening the lives of millions of people the world over.

There seems to be a new momentum among the industrialised countries to assume their responsibilities in this regard, as evidenced by the most recent G8 summit in Germany. The EU has agreed to certain targets. Their impact on the overall process

of global warming is not evident, but they are certainly a step in the right direction. The US administration also showed an openness that could be characterised as a departure from previous positions. However, it did not go as far as committing itself to specific targets for reducing emissions;

instead, it committed itself to continuing discussions with the major emitters. The position of the US administration has been not to commit itself to specific carbon dioxide reduction targets, but to deal with the problem by improving technology.

The UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol are the only instruments at the disposal of governments for protecting the world's climate

Blessing in disguise

The lack of a breakthrough at the G8 is a blessing in disguise, to the extent that such an agreement would have been reached outside any multilateral framework, and would have been akin to a 'coalition of the willing'. It is generally recognised that the industrialised countries should assume most of the responsibility for cleaning the atmosphere, as they are the ones which polluted it in the first instance, given that they account for as much as two-thirds of total greenhouse gas emissions. However, climate change is too important to be left to the countries that are responsible for the problem. Developed countries are the cause, but the effect stretches far beyond their boundaries into



Thai activists in front of the UN office in Bangkok ... developed and developing countries must assume common responsibilities for mitigating climate change. AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit

developing countries, and into an area that is the common heritage of humanity. Whatever agreement is reached among developed countries, it should be viewed as a contribution to a truly multilateral agreement in which the developing countries will have to participate. It should be considered as elements of the whole rather than a final agreement. It would be unfortunate if the G8 reached an agreement and then attempted to impose it on the rest of the UN membership.

The cost of adaptation

Curbing emissions is only one aspect of the challenge. Reducing carbon dioxide emissions may slow down global warming, but will not help those who are already suffering as a result of climate change. The gases that have been released into the atmosphere over the years are already capable of causing natural disasters. Climate change represents a serious threat to developing countries whose economies are heavily dependent on natural resources. In a number of African countries, more than 70% of the population depends on subsistence agriculture – and agriculture is threatened by frequent droughts and floods. Some studies estimate that Africa may lose US\$25bn in crop failures owing to rising temperatures, and another US\$4bn owing to declining rainfall. In fact, the basis of existence of a large number of people is threatened. It was against this background that the Kyoto Protocol addressed itself to the specific needs and special circumstances of vulnerable countries.

Through the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, developed countries undertook to provide developing countries with the financial resources they need to mitigate the effects of climate change; help them meet their obligations under the Convention and the Protocol; and transfer the technology and skills they need to cope with the impacts of climate change.

There have been very limited resource flows to developing countries to help them deal with the reality of climate change. Climate change has imposed additional hardships on countries that were already struggling economically in the face of dwindling official development assistance and insignificant flows of foreign direct investment.

Meanwhile, developed countries are spending billions of dollars on measures to protect themselves against the consequences of global warming.

The playing field is not level. Industrialised countries are responsible for the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions that are causing global warming. The developing countries are the first to be affected by the consequences of global warming. The developed countries are better equipped to deal with the consequences of climate change by virtue of their technological know-how, and their financial and other resources. Furthermore, their standards of living will not be significantly affected by occurrences such as droughts and floods. It is also easier for developed countries to adopt new systems of production. In developing countries, droughts, floods and desertification will not only destroy systems of production, but will also threaten the lives of millions of people. Climate change represents an immediate and serious threat to developing countries.

The way forward

There is a need to assume common responsibilities for climate change. The high-level meeting organised by the UN Secretary-General in New York on 24 September this year presents developed and developing countries with an opportunity to exchange views on this crucial subject. Equally important is the thematic debate organised by the President of the General Assembly. These initiatives will hopefully create a favourable environment for the meeting of the UNFCCC State Parties in Bali in December this year, aimed at launching a negotiating process leading to a truly multilateral agreement to be concluded before the expiry of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012.

In the meantime, it is important for countries to meet their existing obligations under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and helping developing countries to cope with the effects of climate change.

Dr Kaire M Mbuende is the Permanent Representative and Ambassador of the Republic of Namibia at the UN.



Current dilemmas in Latin America—



Relations between the US and its neighbouring continent of Latin America have reached an all-time low. **Meredith E Staples** traces the causes and consequences, and suggests a way forward

US relations



IN March 2007 the US president, George W Bush, undertook a six-day tour of Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico. His visit has been widely viewed as an attempt to assuage South American perceptions of neglect by the US, due largely to its preoccupation with the war in Iraq, which is highly unpopu-

lar in the region. Resentment and disappointment over the lack of US aid to the continent have also been fuelled by Bush's promise in 2001 to make Latin America a priority of his presidency.

As speculated in the Latin American and US press, this tour was also an opportunity for Bush to offset the anti-American and anti-Bush rhetoric and regional influence of the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, who also toured the continent at that time. Bush's visit came at arguably one of the lowest points in Latin American-US relations in recent times, evidenced in part by the anti-American, anti-Bush and anti-globalist protestors at every stop on his tour.

Each side blames the other for the deterioration of the relationship. The US holds Latin American countries responsible for the moribund state of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the continuous flow of undocumented workers northwards, the rise of populism, the poor performance of their economies, and the unabated production and trafficking of illicit narcotics. Latin America, in turn, is displeased with the unequal US trading demands for an FTAA, its lack of concern about Latin America's economic and political difficulties since 9/11, the underperformance and social costs of neoliberal economic reforms mandated by the US for debt relief, and what many Latin Americans consider to be an immoral war in Iraq and on terrorism. The common denominator in all the Latin American complaints is a general frustration with America's belligerent unilateralism, not only in relation to the region but worldwide, embodied most fully in the latter's shunning of multilateral organisations and agreements in its efforts to combat Islamic terrorism.

The resurgence of American unilateralism has greatly amplified anti-American sentiments in Latin America, and fuelled the rhetoric of socialist and populist leaders. This is likely to have damaging effects on hemispheric economic and political relations unless the US renews its commitment to work through international and regional organisations to tackle hemispheric and global issues. Consequently, repairing this troubled relationship will require more than a goodwill tour by Bush during which he extols the Ameri-

can people's generous gift of tax dollars to the region.

Unilateralism, or the tendency to opt out of a multilateral framework/collective action and act alone in addressing a particular international or regional challenge, has been a linchpin of American foreign policy. This unilateralism has manifested itself in either direct action, such as military engagement, or, more subtly, in multilateral negotiations. In the latter, the US has used its power to limit the choices or alter the course of action of other negotiation partners in line with its own wishes, either by applying political pressure or by threatening them with harmful consequences. US unilateralism enjoyed a revival in the Reagan era, yet only became a fundamental element of US foreign policy under George W Bush, when unilateralist policy moved from being selectively applied in specific circumstances to becoming a 'global doctrine'. So, although 9/11 has often been cited as the cause of America's unabashed and vigorous unilateralism, in reality the Bush administration had already adopted it as its basic foreign policy posture. Furthermore, the new unilateralism is ideologically driven. The substance of this ideology is the conviction that the US can legitimately exercise its power abroad solely for American interests, and that this exercise of power should not be subject to review or approval by any external power or international body.

Global realities

Another, less ideological, justification is the argument that multilateral institutions are too often plagued by decision-making paralysis, and are therefore incapable of acting expeditiously. Therefore, unilateralism is the only feasible means of quickly and decisively addressing new global realities such as international terrorism. It is not surprising, then, that Washington regards unilateralism as the ideal mode of action given that, as the world's sole superpower, the US is the only country that retains the ability to act alone.

Guatemalan peasants protest against the Latin American visit of US President George W Bush. AP Photo/Moises Castillo

This orientation calls into question the US commitment to the multilateral organisations it created and promoted after World War 2 and, consequently, its willingness to uphold and sponsor multilateral agreements and norms. Through, for example, the UN and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the US promoted the establishment of an international order built on commonly accepted principles and norms. However, while the US was instrumental in establishing these international and multilateral organisations and instruments, in reality it has exercised a 'selective multilateralism' – the tendency to resort to unilateralism when it perceives multilateral institutions as obstacles to its own agenda, or when its preferred course of action collides with international political constraints. This proclivity for eschewing multilateral organisations, buttressed by the American ideology of 'exceptionalism', has been primarily manifested in America's relations with developing countries, and in its military operations.

Recent examples of America's penchant for ignoring the norms and standards of multilateralism are its rejection of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, its withholding of its UN dues because it disagreed with some aspects of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and its resounding rejection of the International Criminal Court jurisdiction over US military personnel under the 1998 Rome Statute. However, unlike during the Cold War period, when unilateral action around the globe from Vietnam to Grenada was justified in the name of the universal goals of security and democracy, justifications for the new unilateralist doctrine lack credibility.

Latin American states, from the Caribbean countries of Cuba and Haiti to the Southern Cone countries of Chile and Argentina, perhaps more than those in any other global region, have been targets of America's hegemony and unilateralist policies. As the most powerful nation in the hemisphere, the US has been free to employ its incomparable political, economic and military force to direct the hemisphere's agenda, with or without explicit or tacit support for its policies. Quite predictably then, the US

has repeatedly dealt with inter-American issues without consulting or seeking the approval of its southern neighbours, earning it the reputation of a country that rarely consults with others, reluctantly compromises, and reacts badly when others criticise or oppose its actions.

Additionally, Latin American attitudes toward the US often mirror the ebb and flow of American unilateralism. When American unilateralism is overly aggressive and self-interested, anti-Americanism is more intense; conversely, when the US makes a concerted effort to consult

The US has consistently intervened in Latin American affairs to promote and protect American interests in the region

with its neighbours and offers support, anti-Americanism wanes. At present, the Bush administration's generally dismissive and condescending attitude toward the region, along with its confrontational approach to newly elected populist leaders – as manifested in its support for the attempted *coup d'état* against Chavez in 2002 – has generated much resentment in the region. This resentment, along with anger over the Bush administration's unilateralist approach to the world, and its disregard for international institutions and norms, has caused a great deal of strain and confrontation in the Latin American-US relationship.

The Monroe Doctrine

The US has a long history of unilateralist intervention in Latin America. From the demise of the Spanish empire in Latin America up to the present, it has consistently intervened in Latin American affairs to promote and protect American interests in the region. The Monroe Doctrine and Roosevelt Corollary have been the foundational doctrines justifying US intervention in the domestic politics of its neighbours. However, there were periods in which the US showed an interest in building up multilateral ties in the region. In 1947 the Truman administration, seeking to make permanent the military alliance of World War 2, promoted the Rio Pact, a treaty entered into by

hemispheric foreign ministers to ensure regional security. Subsequently, in 1948, the US was at the forefront of efforts to redesign the Pan-American system through the establishment of the Organisation of American States (OAS), a more formal and institutionalised system for handling hemispheric issues. Although these organisations enshrined the principle of non-intervention, the US later often disregarded this principle. Furthermore, the US and its priorities always dominated these organisations. When these multilateral channels did not conform to its needs, it resorted to unilateralism.

The Monroe Doctrine, the ideological foundation of US diplomatic and military intervention in Latin American affairs, was derived from a speech by President James Monroe to Congress in 1823, warning the European powers against any attempt to restore the authority of the Spanish crown over its former colonies, because this would be regarded as 'the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition to the United States'. The significance of this statement was its presumption that the US had a unique leadership role in the hemisphere, and also had the authority to speak on behalf of all Latin American countries – a presumption implying unilateral and not collective action, and grounded in American superiority in an asymmetrical relationship of unequals. The US employed this doctrine not with the intent of creating formal colonies in Latin America, as it believed such direct control was undemocratic and politically and strategically undesirable; rather, it sought to cement its influential position in the hemisphere by insulating the region from European influence so that it alone could dominate it in political, economic and military terms.

America's first large-scale military involvement in the hemisphere was the Spanish-American War of 1898. The US resisted Spain's attempt to maintain its colonies of the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, then established them as US protectorates. In Cuba, the US agreed to relinquish control to the newly independent state provided it gave the US a constitutional right – enshrined in the Platt Amendment – to intervene by armed force to ensure political stability. The Monroe

Doctrine was augmented by the Roosevelt Corollary, Theodore Roosevelt's patronising declaration in 1904 that the US had a duty to intervene in cases where Latin American governments acted irresponsibly and committed chronic wrongdoing. In effect, Roosevelt appointed the US as the hemisphere's 'policeman'. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the US, emboldened by the Monroe Doctrine and Roosevelt Corollary, envisioned its role and destiny in the hemisphere as that of advancing the spread of democracy and freedom while actively pursuing its economic and strategic interests. This ideology, combined with racist notions of Latin Americans as lazy, backward, and unsuited for self-rule, encouraged brazen imperialist acts such as the construction of the Panama Canal. Roosevelt prevailed over objections to the proposed canal site by facilitating the creation of a new Central American state.

From 1900 to 1928, the primary goals of the US in terms of Latin America were to develop markets for US exports, gain access to Latin America's raw materials, and create and shore up stable regimes favourable to American trade and investment. To this end, the US government actively assisted the investment and development of US companies in Latin America – such as the United Fruit Company – and established an undisputed American sphere of influence in the region. In this role as an imperial power, the US did not shy away from armed intervention in the Central-American-Caribbean region, thinking it would promote a framework of political order and stability that would assist and encourage US business. As a result, by the end of World War 1, the US was close to exercising hegemony in the Caribbean basin through the military occupation of Nicaragua, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Cuba, and the wielding of veto power over their domestic politics.

A Latin American backlash against this aggressive interventionist behaviour led

the US to adopt a conciliatory position toward the region, a stance initiated by Herbert Hoover, which culminated in Frank D Roosevelt's 'Good Neighbor' policy of 1933. This made explicit the American government's retreat from the practice of direct military intervention. However, this renunciation of aggressive unilateral intervention was forgotten during the Cold War when the US was concerned with the possible expansion of communism, a fear heightened by the rising influence of Marxist ideology in Latin America.

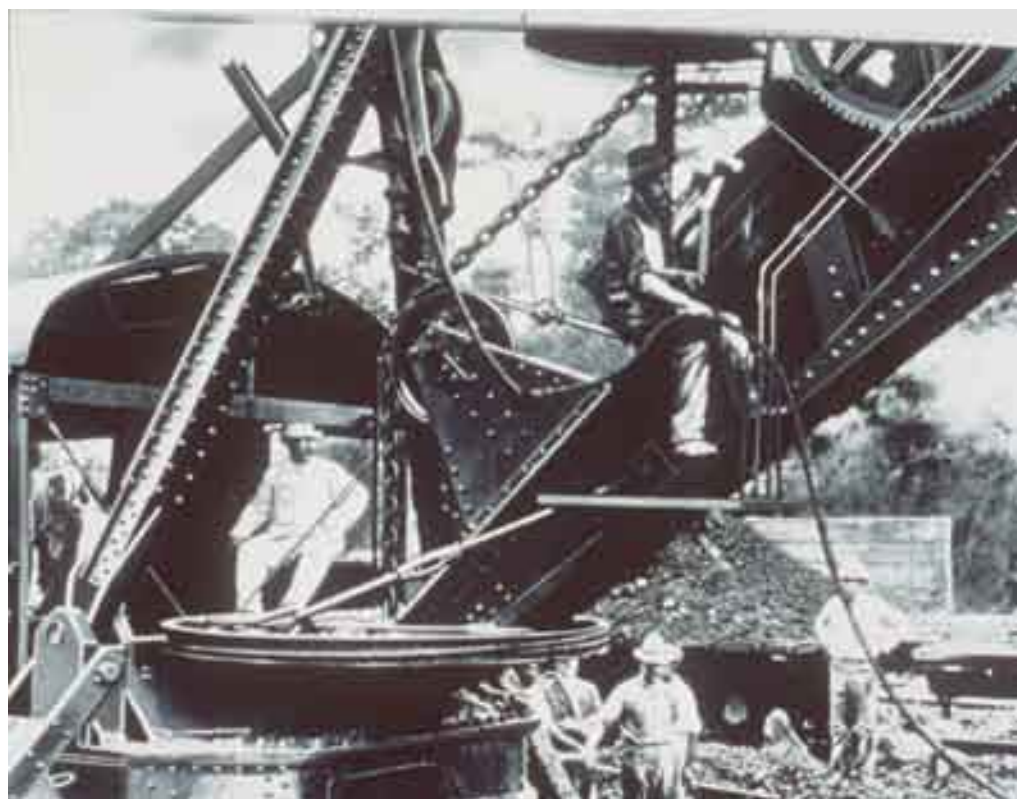
Resistance to the US

Specifically, the US was afraid that the Soviets would covertly infiltrate Latin America politically and then directly challenge the US in its own backyard. It responded to this perceived threat with a two-pronged approach: direct – usually covert – military intervention; and monetary aid for improving the social and economic conditions of the poor in Latin America so that Marxist ideology would not find fertile ground in which to germinate. The use of aid to undermine the appeal of Marxism was at the heart of President John F Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, which, although multilater-

ally sponsored, was a unilateral policy in terms of which the US distributed aid after a Latin American country had submitted a detailed development plan for approval.

US military action was not so benign. The US vigorously aided anti-left forces militarily and financially in Chile, Cuba, Nicaragua and El Salvador, and even actively backed attempts to overthrow democratically elected socialist governments. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, the US scaled down its involvement in the region, since it no longer played a strategic role in the US–Soviet confrontation. In the post-Cold War era the US has continued to rely primarily on unilateralist policies to engage with its southern neighbours, principally over perceived security threats, which it has enlarged to include narcotics, immigration, and even peasant land seizures. Accordingly, the US intervened militarily in Haiti, to prevent the flow of illegal immigrants to the US, and in Panama, when it extradited Manuel Noriega in order to put him on trial for facilitating the movement of narcotics from the Andes region to the US.

At various points in the US–Latin America relationship, often coinciding with periods or incidents of forceful American unilateral action, US diplo-



President Theodore Roosevelt on a steam shovel during the construction of the Panama Canal ... Roosevelt appointed the US as the hemisphere's 'policeman'. AP Photo/Smithsonian

matic, economic and military interventions have provoked strongly negative reactions in Latin America, especially among its elites and intelligentsia. 'Anti-yanqui' critiques of US hegemony have frequently been expressed in art and literature, most notably in José Enrique Rodó's anti-American tract *Ariel* (1900), which contrasted America's excessive materialism with Latin America's superior cultural sensitivity. Anti-Americanism also took the form of nationalist political movements. For example, in 1845, when the US invaded a newly independent Mexico and annexed half of its territory, that country expressed its resentment in a burst of virulent nationalism. When the US invaded its southern neighbours, or attempted to do so (as it did in Cuba in 1961), it was frequently described as a 'colossus' that threatened to swallow up the rest of the Americas. Resentment against America's arrogant and self-interested intervention in the region has been compared to a growing tree: taking shape as a shrub in the late 18th century, then deepening its roots and spreading its branches in response to concrete US abuses of power. Over time this anti-Americanism became increasingly effective at countering US power. The most successful attempt to throw off the yoke of America's dominance was the 1959 Cuban revolution: Cuban revolutionaries not only overthrew the US-sponsored dictatorship, but also wrenched Cuba away from US control. Even when individual governments were either too weak or unwilling to resist the US, resistance still took place in the form of protests, boycotts, or violent resistance, including guerrilla warfare.

More recent resistance to US hegemony and power in the region has often emanated from indigenous communities and universities, whose ideas and leaders have entered national politics through populist leaders like Hugo Chávez or leftist leaders like Bolivia's Evo Morales, who was an indigenous leader before becoming president in 2006. Similarly, *campesinos* (rural workers) in Columbia have resisted the US-enforced programme to eradicate their coca production, especially since the US has provided little financial support for alternative crop development.

Still, while Latin American countries have resented American activism, they are all too aware of the power of the US. Few have been willing to sever economic and political ties with the US or directly oppose it in an international forum such as the UN, because of their reliance on American investments and markets. So, when the US refused to extend aid to Argentina during its peso crisis in 2001, as it had done during a similar crisis in Mexico in 1994, Argentina, a long-standing incubator of anti-American sentiment, could not afford to sever its economic ties with the US. But one way of gaining bargaining power *vis-à-vis* the US has been the establishment of regional trading blocs such as MERCOSUR in South America and the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). These have met with varying degrees of success.

More often, the strategy of many Latin American states has been selective co-operation: co-operating with the US on economic matters, while retaining freedom of action on non-economic ones. Therefore, except when the US has pursued aggressive military unilateralism in the region, as in the 1970s, opposition to its agenda and anti-American sentiments have usually been muted. Yet the explicit anti-American sentiments following 9/11 have revealed persistent anti-American opinion in the region.

Latin Americans disagree with US

Latin American countries feel less compelled to align themselves with the US when this is not in their political, moral or diplomatic interest

methods to pursue its 'war on terror', specifically its unilateralist disregard of the Geneva Convention in its handling of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, and 'black sites'. Many view America's championing of human rights and democracy on their continent as both empty and hypocritical. They point out that, while the US has scolded the Pinochet regime in Chile, the PRI-led government in Mexico, and the Guatemala government for human rights violations, it applies a different set of standards when it perceives its own security as being

jeopardised. Following the end of the Cold War, Latin American countries feel less compelled to align themselves with the US when this is not in their political, moral or diplomatic interest.

Lack of consultation

This recent assertion of sovereignty may also be fuelled by a deep frustration on the part of many Latin American officials and diplomats with what they perceive to be America's lack of consultation and disregard for their views and concerns during the policy-making process. The sentiment is echoed by the region's public. For instance, Brazilians widely believe that the US is an imperial power that needs to be confronted and forced to acknowledge Brazil's influence and significance in the region. Likewise, despite the risks, the former Mexican president, Vicente Fox, refused to support Bush on the UN resolution on Iraq.

Across the region, US unilateral policies face firm hemispheric opposition. These include its certification programme of countries that comply with US narcotics policies, and the Helms-Burton Act, which sanctions countries which trade with Cuba. This frank opposition to unilateral US policies is an expression of a general discontent with the region's role as a subordinate ally of the US in global forums, and of a new sense of freedom and independence in expressing disagreement with American goals and strategies. This resistance has generated friction and antagonism. Whether or not this new dynamic will lead to a more equitable Latin American-US relationship is not clear. US hemispheric pre-eminence remains a cold reality.

Before 9/11 it appeared that certain conditions, such as the spread of democracy and liberal market economies in Latin America during the 1980s and 1990s, coupled with Washington's reduced focus on security matters, would lead to multilateral ties between that continent and the US. Hopeful signs of positive change in the US-Latin America relationship could be found in the cessation of major conflict in Central America; the implementation of the Brady Plan, that provided debt relief to Latin Ameri-



A member of the US House of Representatives, Tom Tancredo, with a pile of petitions against the US returning the Panama Canal to Panama ... the US should begin to engage with its neighbours in a more multilateral way. AP Photo/Joe Marquette

can countries; and the hemisphere's first summit meeting in about 20 years, hosted by the US. However, this trajectory of positive change lost momentum following the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Washington quickly developed tunnel vision, letting previous commitments and concerns fall by the wayside, its principal concern being its military operations in the Middle East. Any attention paid to Latin America became unilateralist, sporadic, and narrowly focused on security issues. Also, since Bush is maligned in the region for his 'war against terror' and his perceived arrogance, it is doubtful that his trip has repaired the fractures in the US-Latin American relationship.

Both Latin America and the US have incurred – and will continue to incur – substantial costs from this deterioration of their relationship. The US is likely to lose any remaining support in Latin America for its fight against terrorism, thereby endangering its strategic ties with the region. Both the US and Latin America will lose out economically if the tabled FTAA negotiations are not resurrected. Only if the US agrees to bargain more fairly, as opposed to wielding its economic might to subdue its negotiation

partners, will the FTAA have a future.

Perhaps the most valuable action to help restore and improve this relationship would be America's active engagement with, and use of, regional and international institutions to address its global and regional challenges. However, if it continues to undermine regional and multilateral frameworks through its doctrinal unilateralism, this will jeopardise not only hemispheric diplomatic, economic and cultural ties, but also the very institutions on which the current global order rests. Moving from doctrinal unilateralism to multilateralism would require Washington not only to reformulate its policies on Latin America, but also to replace the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary, which frame its imperialist orientation to the region, with a new set of principles that would place it among equals. In sum, the US should renounce its unilateral high-handedness and engage in multilateral co-operation with the nations of Latin America. One immediate step the US could take is to begin engaging with its neighbours in a more multilateral fashion by, for example, eliminating domestic barriers to agricultural imports from Latin America. Latin

American countries are eager to enter into bilateral or multilateral trade agreements with the US because it is often the primary importer of their agricultural and fibre products. Nevertheless, they are incensed by US demands that Latin American countries do away with agricultural subsidies and tariffs while it maintains highly protectionist agricultural policies. Also, the US could soften its approach to immigration, increasing the number of temporary workers in the US and developing procedures for some undocumented workers to earn legal status.

Finally, the US should be more forthcoming with aid to help raise the standard of living of the poor in Latin America rather than give money to fight the narcotics trade, which is driven by US demand, or fund border security. During his tour, Bush claimed that direct aid to Latin America has doubled since 2001, to US\$1.6bn. However, analysts say Bush used an accounting gimmick to come up with this figure, and that direct US aid to Latin America has actually remained stable since 2000. Moreover, the budget Bush had sent to Congress in February 2007 actually called for an 8% reduction in aid to Latin America, a slap in the face of Latin American nations which need much more aid for their economies to grow and also to meet basic infrastructural needs such as education and health. If the US recognises the priorities of Latin Americans themselves, it will probably find a more receptive audience for its free trade and security agendas.

One step Latin American states could take to encourage the US to move away from unilateralism and embrace a multilaterally oriented foreign policy would be to reinforce and expand existing regional trading blocs. This would give them more bargaining power *vis-à-vis* the US, which would push the latter to engage with the region in a more multilateral fashion.

Meredith E Staples is a doctoral student in political science at Rutgers University, New Jersey, US.



Soft talk from the Kremlin

Russia is making a concerted effort to enhance its international appeal. However, writes **Oksana Antonenko**, the Kremlin will not win real global legitimacy until it cleans up its act at home, and moderates its attacks on some Western countries and leaders

IN July this year the International Olympic Committee, meeting in Guatemala City, caused a major surprise by awarding the 2014 Winter Olympics to the little-known Russian resort of Sochi on the Black Sea. Sochi beat the South Korean resort of Pyeongchang, regarded as a clear favourite, by just four votes in the second round. The reason was simple: on the eve of the vote the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, flew to Guatemala and charmed the Olympic committee.

According to Jean-Claude Killy, a French member of the committee and a former Olympic ski champion, 'Putin being here was very important. He worked very hard at it. He was nice. He spoke French – he never speaks French. He spoke English – he never speaks English. The Putin charisma can explain four votes.'

This coup will undoubtedly add to Putin's stature as a leader capable of re-establishing Russia's international importance. But, more importantly, it is also seen as a clear indication that the Kremlin, which has not achieved a great deal through the exercise of 'hard power' or through its energy diplomacy – both regarded with suspicion in the West as well as by some neighbouring countries – is learning rapidly how to win friends by deploying 'soft power' instead.

In his famous book *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*, Joseph Nye defined soft power as 'the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies.'

Growing international ambition

Putin has significantly enhanced Russia's international appeal since the Yeltsin period, when the country was seen as defeated, weak, and increasingly irrelevant. Now Russia is back on the international stage. It is flush with oil money, confident, assertive (in some cases bordering on arrogant), and displays a growing international ambition. However, experts disagree over whether Russia's new activism and unilateralism – such as its threat to veto a US/EU resolution on resolving the status of Kosovo – has resulted in a greater international acceptance of that country as a legitimate and attractive international player. Some believe Moscow's new assertiveness is just a smokescreen to conceal Russia's continuing weakness and vulnerability, the result of an overdependency on energy exports and underdeveloped democratic institutions. Others argue that its resurgence is now irreversible, and that its activism reflects its international significance as a vast territory and an energy and military superpower. The best way of assessing which school of thought is

closer to the mark is to see whether Russia is indeed gaining 'soft power' capacity, and whether it has learnt to deploy this in a way that contributes to resolving, rather than worsening, key international problems.

In August 1991, following a failed *coup d'état* by some die-hards in Mikhail Gorbachev's cabinet, the Soviet Union and the communist ideology that had accompanied it passed into history; the era of globalisation and (relative) world peace had arrived. Francis Fukuyama's notion of the 'end of history' encapsulated the euphoria felt by intellectuals and policy-makers in the West. The liberals who led Russia in the first years of Boris Yeltsin's presidency were confident that their country would soon enter the orbit of economically advanced Western democracies. On the contrary, Russia experienced a terrible decade of economic collapse, law and order crises, civil war in Chechnya, plummeting life expectancy, and rapid deindustrialisation. In 2001, just one year after Putin had succeeded Yeltsin as president, George W Bush declared during his presidential campaign that Russia, having been defeated in the Cold War, was no longer strategically significant to the US. The West's only concern over Russia, he added, was whether its endemic internal disorder would undermine the security of its nuclear material.

Economic stability and growth

Today the picture is markedly different. Putin has restored law and order, and has presided over significant economic stability and growth. Most of this is the result of high levels of oil and gas export revenues: Russia has the world's largest gas reserves, and in 2006 produced more oil than Saudi Arabia. Its economy has expanded every year for almost a decade, growing by more than 6% in 2005 and 2006. During this period, its GDP has increased by more than 50%, and its foreign exchange reserves by 46% (or from \$12bn in 2000 to \$217bn in April 2006), making them the fourth largest in the world. Moreover, it has paid off most of its foreign debt, which ran to \$154bn in 1998. At the beginning of 2006 it had a budget surplus of 7.5% of GDP – the seventh surplus year running.

Owing to increasing oil and gas prices, Russia's stabilisation fund, set up to harvest windfall oil revenues of more than \$27 a barrel, exceeded \$66bn in April 2006, and is projected to exceed \$75bn in 2007 and \$110bn in 2008. Its trade surplus increased to more than \$140bn in 2006. Levels of fixed investment increased by 10% in 2005, and more than 13% in 2006. According to Central Bank estimates, net private capital inflow into Russia in 2006 reached an all-time high of \$41.6bn. Initial public offerings (IPO) by Russian companies (some state-controlled), mostly in London, have raised more than \$17bn. About 150 companies intend to make IPOs in the next two years, a development which could bring in some \$30bn–\$50bn. Wealthy Russians are travelling the

The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, during Sochi's final presentation to the International Olympic Committee in Guatemala City ... Putin played a major role in winning the 2014 Winter Olympics for this little-known Black Sea resort. ITAR-TASS/Mikhail Klimentyev

world, and have acquired expensive properties in several European capitals. It is estimated that there are more than 200 000 Russians living in London; many of them have bought property there, and are boosting the city's financial sector.

Russia's economic recovery has coincided with a reassertion of state control over the media, the energy sector and nascent democratic institutions. While this process has been criticised in the West, and has been characterised as a retreat from democracy, Putin continues to enjoy the support of more than 70% of Russia's adult population. According to opinion polls, Russians prefer stability and security over 1990s-style democracy. In marked contrast to attitudes in other Central European countries, and in post-Soviet states such as Ukraine and Georgia, more than 35% even approve of granting Putin a life-long presidency. His popularity at home stems not only from his ability to promote the country's stability and prosperity, but also from his success in restoring Russia's pride, and reasserting its status in international politics.

In 2007 Russia successfully completed its first G8 presidency, despite some influential politicians in the US and Europe arguing that it should be excluded from the G8 due to its poor record in respect of democracy and human rights. Russia has been increasingly active in the post-Soviet space, reclaiming much of its lost influence in central Asia. It has regained its status as an important player in the Middle East, where Putin has been warmly greeted by leaders of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria. He has also brought Russia closer to Asia by joining ASEAN, and pursuing active diplomacy with key Asian partners such as China, Japan and India. Russia, with its estimated 20m Muslims, has even joined the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, despite its bloody war in Chechnya. Finally, it has begun to engage with its diasporas all over the world, and is trying to spread Russian language education and capture information space. The Kremlin has even launched a 24-hour English-language TV channel to rival the BBC and CNN.

Key questions

Yet many experts and policy-makers remain sceptical about Russia's ability to realise its ambition of becoming a major power in a multipolar world via the use of 'soft power'. Many questions are being asked: does Russia inspire interest and admiration elsewhere in the world? Or is Moscow simply trading on Cold War nostalgia among those seeking to counteract and restrain a newly interventionist US? This article analyses Russia's older forms of 'soft power' – specifically its Soviet legacies – and what can be now attributed to its new – specifically Russian – appeal to various global constituencies.

For any country to exercise 'soft power', it has to appeal to certain international constituencies, or possess a legitimacy that justifies its leadership on particular issues. 'Soft power' can be expressed in forms of association – either formal (institutions or partnerships) or informal (ad hoc co-operation, or providing an example for others to follow) – with the country in question either defining agendas or setting norms.

The Soviet Union, for all its faults, possessed both 'software', in the form of ideology, and 'hardware', in the form of alliances and partnerships. It needed the former to exercise its power



above and beyond what it could achieve by military or economic means alone. Communist ideology was popular in many countries around the world, including some NATO members. The ideas of equality and social justice in Communist ideology – which in practice were often imposed via repression and the violation of basic human rights – nonetheless provided it with a veneer of legitimacy which the Soviet Union relied on, particularly in its relations with the post-colonial developing world. Soviet internationalism was backed by a massive investment in the education of foreign activists in the Soviet Union, and the promotion of Russian as the *lingua franca* of the entire socialist camp and its supporters. This made the Soviet Union a powerful player, not only as a nuclear power but also as the facilitator of the aspirations to freedom of individuals and entire societies throughout the world.

In the 1990s all these sources of Soviet power evaporated. After its weaknesses were increasingly exposed during the *glasnost* period, socialism was finally seen to be a lie – a cynical instrument for controlling individuals and nations. Russia stopped investing in the education of foreigners. Its internationalism was replaced by xenophobia and nationalism, manifested, for example, in the rise of skinhead groups targeting ethnic minorities in the streets of Russian cities. Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet bloc also changed perceptions of Soviet education; many countries, including some Central European states, now regard this as an obstacle instead of an asset. Russian has gradually been replaced by English as the *lingua franca* in former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries, or in some cases (including Central Asia and some members of the



The nationalist pro-Kremlin youth group Nashi, Russian for 'Ours', march in Moscow to mark the seventh anniversary of Putin's election as president ... Nashi's flags are a mix of Soviet and Russian imperial-era imagery. AP Photo/Sergey Ponomarev

Commonwealth of Independent States) has been abandoned altogether, without any meaningful replacement. Russia's economic weakness and internal chaos completely delegitimised its claims to a 'great power' role. Finally, its blunt and unsuccessful attempts to carve out a sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space were dismissed as neo-imperialism, and prompted a number of post-Soviet states to form rival alliances.

When Putin assumed power he quickly recognised that while the Soviet Union could not be restored, Russia could still make use of a number of Soviet legacies. This assessment was based on a degree of nostalgia for stability, unity, and respect. He started by experimenting at home: he reinstated the old Soviet anthem, albeit with new lyrics; reinstated Victory Day military parades; and halted debates about history, proclaiming that Russia had been and would still be a great power, regardless of its recent history. This approach, accompanied by economic stabilisation and increased prosperity, has been at the core of Putin's domestic success.

In foreign affairs, too, Putin did not shy away from reviving old Soviet instruments where this was possible or advantageous. He promoted many security officials in the Russian government, and empowered them to re-establish links with their colleagues who continued to live and work in other CIS countries. He established a special presidential department for interregional and cultural ties with foreign countries; its mandate was to reach out to those groups within CIS states which still wanted to maintain closer ties with Russia, and provide them with moral and financial support. As the Russian economy presented new opportunities for investment, Putin also worked to revive

Russian as the main language for commerce and education in post-Soviet Eurasia and beyond.

Russia has also attracted more than 3m (some estimate up to 15m) migrant labourers from former member countries of the Soviet Union, whose remittances constitute a major engine of growth in those states. Many Westerners now seek work in Moscow, where salaries in the financial and business sector are higher and opportunities are better than in the West. Putin's support for the Orthodox Church, which has undergone a massive revival in Russia, is often contrasted with poor church attendance in the West, seen by some as a moral crisis.

Putin has also started to capitalise on the Soviet legacy in Russia's international relations. Growing international opposition to the war in Iraq has provided Russia with a window of opportunity to occupy a niche in active US criticism. This has raised expectations, which cannot be realised in practice, that Russia can re-emerge to counterbalance American power, as the Soviet Union did during the Cold War. However, rather than having a direct impact on US interventionism, Putin's policies have primarily been rhetorical. He has not tried to change American policies, but has sought instead to capture an international audience by criticising the US. He has not shied away from criticising American and European policies, even on Iraq and Afghanistan, while other international leaders have long preferred to keep their criticism 'off the record'.

Munich Security Conference

In February 2007, in an address to the Munich Security Conference, Putin accused the US of attempting to dominate other nations, ignoring international law, and interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries under the guise of democracy. His speech contained nothing new; it simply attempted to openly articulate criticism towards US policies, and used the same arguments heard in many other countries around the world. However, his forceful delivery signalled that Moscow had adopted a tougher stance. In May 2007, during Victory Day celebrations in Red Square, Putin warned that an 'ideology of confrontation and extremism' posed new global threats which, 'just as under the Third Reich, show the same contempt for human life and ... an aspiration to establish an exclusive dictate over the world'. Although the Kremlin later denied that he had compared the US to the Third Reich, this was a plausible interpretation in light of his increasingly blunt and undiplomatic statements about US and Western policies.

The British government recently asked Moscow to extradite an ex-KGB official, Andrei Lugovoi whom it believes used a radioactive substance to murder Alexander Litvinenko, another former KGB agent, and a self-styled Putin critic, who was granted asylum in Britain. This gave Putin another opportunity to use strident rhetoric: he accused the UK of 'colonial thinking',

and added that British politicians should 'first get a brainwash' before asking Russia to act. These statements have more in common with Robert Mugabe's vitriol against the British than the measured reactions of a respected statesman.

Putin's verbal assaults – which he claims are provoked by unjustified and biased Western criticism of Russia, and the West's failure to recognise its (or his) successes – are aimed at increasing his domestic popularity, and gaining the support of those around the world who oppose the current US administration. In other words, America's misguided and poorly thought out policies have given Moscow an opportunity to claim the moral high ground on a number of issues. These include the Kremlin's opposition to the war in Iraq, its questioning of the existence of weapons of mass destruction in that country under Saddam Hussein, its opposition to humanitarian intervention in the Balkans, and its rhetorical protection of ethnic minorities by opposing Kosovo independence.

Aggressive intervention

In this context, it is interesting that Putin's rhetorical stance on international issues is completely divorced from his actions at home. Domestically, he has done little to protect the rights of minorities: he is responsible for aggressive intervention in Chechnya, and has opposed any multipolar arrangement (or geopolitical pluralism) within Russian-dominated countries in the post-Soviet space. Although Russia champions itself as an informal mediator between the West and the Muslim world in the 'dialogue of civilisations', its domestic record of tolerance and integration of its own 20 million strong Muslim community leaves much to be desired.

Although Soviet legacies still take up a much of the space in Putin's 'soft power' toolbox, this also contains some new items for enhancing Russia's appeal. They can be divided into three areas: 'sovereign democracy', energy security, and information and technology.

One of Putin's main projects has been to create a new state ideology that could help to consolidate the new Russian state, attract the support of its elites and wider population, and help it to win new friends internationally. This ideology is encapsulated in the term 'sovereign democracy', coined by the Putin administration.

Firstly, this ideology asserts that Russia aspires to be a democracy, but that it wants to build such a democracy in accordance with its own timetable, principles and values. It holds that such as democracy should reflect Russian history and traditions rather than yield to a Western vision of what democracy should mean for Russia. This, of course, contradicts the principles approved by Russia in 1990s when it joined the Council of Europe, or even assented to the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. However, this new approach shields Russia from external criticism of its democratic deficit.

Secondly, as the term emphasises, sovereignty is at least as important for Russia as is democracy, and it will not allow its sovereignty and independence to be undermined by external

influences related to democratisation. Following the 'colour revolutions' in Georgia and Ukraine, when corrupt and undemocratic regimes were overthrown through popular protests, the Russian government has been increasingly concerned about possible attempts to provoke a similar 'revolution' in Russia. Rather than viewing these 'colour revolutions' as an exercise of people's rights, Russia has seen them as a Western conspiracy, aimed at orchestrating regime change and bringing to power pro-Western and anti-Russian forces. Although many experts agree that no similar revolution is possible in Russia, the state has taken a number of measures to rule this out entirely, including prohibiting foreign funding for NGOs; paying off all foreign debts, thereby reducing the country's financial vulnerability; establishing tighter controls over the media; bringing pressure to bear on opposition parties; and banning demonstrations, however small. Over time, the idea of a 'sovereign democracy' has rather begun to resemble that of a 'democratic sovereignty'.

The concept of sovereign democracy is unlikely to gain significant international support, if only because it offers nothing new in terms of key values and principles of social organisation. However, it appeals to countries that are worried about America's global agenda, and want to hide behind the rhetoric of 'historic traditions' to protect them against criticism of their own lack of political reform or poor human rights records. It also appeals to those countries that – often for the same sorts of reasons – strongly believe in the non-interference in the internal affairs of others, or see the promotion of democracy in the Middle East as part of the problem rather than part of the solution for modernising Muslim societies.

Another source of Russia's 'soft power' is the growing concern over energy security. Many countries that depend on oil and gas imports from Russia are feeling increasingly vulnerable about the long-term security of these supplies. Major and emerging powers such as the US, the EU, China and India are competing to secure long-term commitments for their growing energy imports. As a result, many smaller countries as well as important regional and global powers are seeking to develop closer

One of Putin's main projects has been to create a new state ideology that could help to consolidate the new Russian state

partnerships with Russia. Recent agreements about the construction of pipelines through Central Asia, the Black Sea and South Eastern Europe have helped to forge closer ties between Russia and some European countries, which are now reluctant to support a tougher line on Russia within the EU. Russia is granting energy exploration contracts to Western companies as means of promoting closer political and economic ties with their countries of origin, as well as gaining support among powerful domestic role players in these countries. For example, in the midst of the Litvinenko crisis between the UK and Russia, most UK companies refused to endorse Blair's and Brown's hard line on Russia, choosing instead to speak in favour of keeping business ties intact or even openly criticising UK policy.

Clearly, the main source of Russia's international appeal is that it is a major global source of oil and natural gas. Currently, most of these exports end up in Europe. However, recent problems in European-Russian relations are causing Moscow



President Vladimir Putin chairs a meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation in the Kremlin in Moscow. ITAR-TASS/Mikhail Klimentyev

and industrial sectors of both countries. The trust developed in the course of this project has helped to move relations between these countries on to a higher level, manifested in more business contacts as well as technological and cultural exchanges. A number of post-Soviet states such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Armenia continue to explore closer ties with Russia in the field of technology.

In addition, information technology, including the internet, are playing an important role in promoting Russia's 'soft power' agenda. Russian is the third largest language group on the internet. Russian language sites are popular not only in Russia and in the post-Soviet space but also increasingly so in other parts of Europe and even in some parts of Asia. This has helped to revive interest in Russian language education, and to develop

to rethink its long-term export strategy and to explore ways of balancing its exports by sending more resources eastwards, and by developing infrastructure – pipelines and liquid natural gas facilities – in eastern Siberia. Europe and Asia might therefore emerge as competitors over Russia's energy resources. This scenario is strongly favoured by Moscow, which sees it as a means of further strengthening Russia's independence and influence. But, given that many countries are moving towards developing alternative sources of energy, some experts doubt whether these infrastructural projects could be completed on time to retain their strategic importance. However, in the short to medium term, Russia's energy resources will remain a major reason for its attractiveness to many countries in Europe and Asia, regardless of its domestic affairs.

Defence industry

The third source of Russia's popularity is its economic and technological capacity and its readiness to enter into equal partnerships with countries that need Russian technology. For example, the residual trust between Russia and China is largely based on military-industrial co-operation. The Russian defence industry has survived thanks to exports to China, which has benefited from access to technology that neither Europeans nor the US were prepared to share with it. The cordial relations that have resulted from this have helped to lay a foundation for co-operation on other bilateral and international issues.

Similarly, Russia and India are now co-operating on a number of defence programmes, including the Brahmos cruise missile. Brahmos is a genuinely joint project, and benefits the defence

a global community where Russians are able to put their views across to a wider international audience. Needless to say, these views often differ widely from the increasingly simplistic rendition of developments in Russia by the international media.

As Russia recovers its economic strength and confidence, its 'soft power' is growing. So far, however, most of this capacity remains linked to its Soviet legacy, and those aspects that are new to Russia itself have yet to win it a true global legitimacy and following. The war in Chechnya, the recent murders of opposition journalists, and the Kremlin's unnecessarily strong and often confrontational rhetoric towards the West have limited Russia's appeal to a Western audience at least. Putin's threats against Europe in the course of opposing American plans for the deployment of missile defence systems have undermined whatever support he might have won among the European public by his opposition to the war in Iraq. However, while the situation in Iraq remains unresolved, Russia will be able to score more 'soft power' points in the Middle East, Asia or even Latin America, especially among those who are strongly opposed to American policies.

For Putin, the real challenge is not to push the limits, but to express opposition to and criticism of Western countries and strategies in constructive and moderate terms. This will win Russia some real international legitimacy, instead of membership of the Mugabe-Chavez-Akhmedinejad axis, whose tirades against America and the West are no longer taken seriously.

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Staring down the barrel

While the challenges are formidable, the SADC mediation in Zimbabwe has a greater chance of succeeding than previous efforts, writes **Brian Raftopoulos**

THE current SADC-mandated mediation in Zimbabwe, led by the South African president, Thabo Mbeki, presents the region with a narrow window of opportunity to avoid an even greater deterioration of that country's political and economic fortunes. The initiative, brought about by a combination of growing regional embarrassment over the Zimbabwean regime's authoritarian violence and international pressure on the southern African regional organisation, faces enormous obstacles in the form of the persistent recalcitrance of decisive elements of that regime. Nevertheless, it does present various role players with an opportunity to pry open new political spaces in that country.

Events on 11 March this year and the period since then have provided new evidence of Zanu-PF's growing reliance on violence as a form of rule. The public beating of opposition and civic leaders, rank-and-file MDC members, and high-profile lawyers signalled an escalation of repression of the political and civic opposition. Faced with a deepening economic crisis, a bitter battle over succession within the ruling party, the persistent presence of opposition forces, and continued international pressure, Zanu-PF responded with characteristic contempt.

The demand by SADC, at end March, that President Robert Mugabe enter into a SADC-led mediation with the opposition is a process that the Zimbabwean leader is obliged to engage with if he is to maintain the integrity and support of the region. Developing regional solidarity has been a key element of Mugabe's survival strategy, and his contempt for the domestic opposition can therefore no longer keep him out of such a dialogue. However, it is certain that he will make the process as difficult as possible for his South African counterpart.

Since 11 March we have already wit-

nessed the continued arrest, assault, torture, and killing of MDC activists on allegations of 'terrorism'. These attempts to deploy the discourse of terror against the opposition is an addition to the rhetoric of exclusion that already has pride of place in Zanu-PF's nationalist vision. The calumny and language of disdain used against arrested MDC activists provides more evidence that building a language of tolerance and inclusion in a post-Mugabe era will be a major challenge.

Equally significant is the fact that the recent violence is Mugabe's introductory gambit to the mediation process. Even as Mbeki has tried to provide a conciliatory space for both sides of the political divide, Zimbabwe's ruling party has sought to exacerbate the differences.

Mugabe can also be expected to engage in a series of delaying tactics, such as calls for postponing the talks, and setting unacceptable preconditions. He is likely to drag out the mediation for as long as possible, even as he prepares for another problematic election in 2008. The Zimbabwean government has already announced a general election at

have been seriously weakened by a combination of state repression, the split within the MDC, and a lack of support within the region. The MDC is thus unable to provide strong internal pressure as a bargaining strategy in the talks. This places the organisation in an invidious situation in which its major points of pressure are a reluctant SADC mediation, pressure from the West, and the possibility of a resurgent opposition in the future. The balance of forces in the current context thus weighs heavily against it.

Bleak picture

The two major pressures confronting Mugabe are Zimbabwe's rapidly declining economy, and the factional battles in his party. The indicators of decline in the Zimbabwean economy have become a standard global reference for economic failure. The inflation rate stands at about 3 700%, while by 2006 GDP per capita was 47% below that in 1980. At the end of 2006 the average minimum wage of Zimbabwean workers was only 16,6% of the poverty datum line, calculated at December 2006 levels, while formal sector employment decreased from 1,4 million in 1998 to 998 000 in 2004. When these indicators are combined with anticipated shortages of food, and the continued loss of high-level skills, the picture looks bleak indeed.

An important aspect of the factional struggle within the ruling party concerns the strategy for 'normalisation' that will lead to a new engagement with the international community, and allow the party elite the time and space to consolidate its rapidly acquired wealth. It is the terms of this re-engagement that will form the core of the mediation talks, while the future of Mugabe himself will be a major feature of this normalisation.

Given the intense battles within Zanu-PF, Mugabe does not feel that he can

The two major pressures confronting Mugabe are Zimbabwe's rapidly declining economy, and the factional battles in his party

end March 2008, and the current assault on the opposition indicates that Mugabe's campaign is already under way.

Thus it appears that Mugabe is once again setting the time frame and agenda for the mediation process. Given the pressure on the mediator to move the process along as quickly as possible, its central emphasis will be on providing the minimum conditions for a 'reasonable and acceptable' election in 2008.

Both Mbeki and Mugabe understand that the opposition forces in Zimbabwe



Tariro Mbudzi, 19, jumps over the third and last fence between Zimbabwe and SA near Beit Bridge ... sustainable alternatives for the incumbent regime are rapidly diminishing. Greg Marinovich/Sunday Times

hand over the torch to anyone else. It is for this reason that the ruling party structures were manipulated to ensure his presidential candidacy in 2008. For Zanu-PF the mediation will thus be about making as few reforms as possible to gain acceptance of an election next year, knowing the current state of the opposition.

On the other hand, the opposition is faced with growing national and international intolerance of its divisions, and the thought that a failure of the mediation process will present major strategic and organisational dilemmas for the future. It is much more dependent on this mediation to open up new political spaces in the country, in the hope that these will provide new opportunities for strengthening its position.

This is not the best position for the Zimbabwean opposition to be in, but this is the reality that has to be confronted and negotiated. More broadly, it is the dilemma of post-liberation opposition movements that must confront the anti-colonial discourse of authoritarian nationalist governments, with a political

language that negotiates the tensions between democratic political questions and the pressures of redistributive economic demands. For the foreseeable future, opposition politics in southern African countries led by former liberation movements are likely to have to deal with the legacies of the legitimacy of these movements, and the critique of their undemocratic features will often be buffeted by the continuing resonance of their anti-colonial messages.

Challenges

It may be that in the current regional and global context, diminished economic alternatives will continue to provide the conditions for generating renewed authoritarian nationalisms. However, developing an alternative, and more tolerant, language of national belonging remains an urgent challenge. A major task of the current SA mediation in Zimbabwe is to negotiate a path between the authoritarian nationalist politics of the Mugabe government and the liberal-democratic demands of the opposition.

This is an enormous undertaking, but there is a real possibility that Mbeki's current initiative will make some progress because of the lack of sustainable political alternatives for the incumbent regime; the weakening of Zanu-PF as a political party; the SA government's greater sense of purpose, given its support from SADC; the rapid, cumulative decline of the Zimbabwean economy; and the opposition's preference for a peaceful settlement. Together, these factors give Mbeki more leverage than he had in the past. Of course, a settlement is not guaranteed, but the failure of this process is likely to lead to more intensified struggles within the ruling party, an economic implosion that is now a security threat for the region, and a long-term loss of confidence in non-violent political processes as a modality of change within the opposition.

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Ten prophets of *Pax Africana*

Adekeye Adebajo celebrates ten African prophets of peace-making, and extracts four key lessons from Africa's post-colonial history for building peace on the continent

THIS ESSAY will celebrate ten African prophets of *Pax Africana*: the establishment and consolidation of peace in Africa. After an introductory section outlining the state of the art of peace-building, we assess three sets of prophets. The first comprises three philosophical prophets who have conceptualised *Pax Africana* and peace-building in Africa, namely Kenya's Ali Mazrui, Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, and Sudan's Francis Deng. The second comprises four idealistic prophets of humanitarian intervention on the continent, namely South Africa's Nelson Mandela, Tanzania's Salim Ahmed Salim, Ghana's Kofi Annan, and Liberia's Ruth Perry. The third comprises pragmatic prophets of peacekeeping, namely Egypt's Boutros Boutros-Ghali, South Africa's Thabo Mbeki, and Nigeria's generals – Ibrahim Babangida, Sani Abacha, and Olusegun Obasanjo.

Africa is a continent of extremes. Cradle of civilisation and location of the paradisaical Garden of Eden, the continent and its many conflicts also represent – for Afro-pessimists – a vision of apocalyptic Armageddon. As I sat in the audience at Nelson Mandela's inauguration in April 1994, celebrating South Africa's transition to democracy, word was reaching us of the slaughter of almost one million people in Rwanda. Since 1960 post-colonial Africa has experienced about 40 wars, which have resulted in more than 10 million deaths, and spawned over 10 million refugees. Africa's conflicts have both internal and external roots, and these must be situated in both contemporary and historical structures and events.

Second generation peace-making

Peace-building is often associated with the 'second generation' of UN missions in the post-Cold War era of the early 1990s, in places such as Angola, Mozambique and Somalia, where efforts have been made to adopt a holistic approach to peace-making. Not only are diplomatic and military tools used to build peace; today's peace-builders also focus on the political, social, and economic aspects of societies emerging from civil war in an effort to address the root causes of those conflicts and to promote human security. Peace-building is thus aimed at achieving not just political but also social peace, and the redressing of economic inequalities that could lead to further conflict. Providing adequate resources and undertaking effective peace-building are therefore particularly important, especially since about half of the conflicts settled in Africa after the Cold War have started again within five years.

It is important to note the profound effect of colonialism and the Cold War on shaping the African state system. Colonialism

created the conditions for many of the ethnic grievances of the post-independence era through arbitrarily drawn colonial boundaries: the fabled 'curse of Berlin'. The Cold War affected the African state system by promoting proxy wars and flooding the continent with arms. As the Cold War ended, the West abandoned African autocrats who had served as reliable clients. As the foreign aid that sustained Cold War proxies was cut off, the trading networks of those countries were increasingly challenged by armed rebellions, which increasingly replaced military coups as the main method for replacing incumbent regimes. Economic reforms mandated by the World Bank and the IMF – the 'terrible twins' of international financial aid – further eroded the control of African autocrats as urban riots and social instability accompanied cuts in health and education and

the removal of government subsidies on food and fuel.

In an increasing number of states, governments could no longer provide security, order, and social services, and lost their control over bureaucracies and their monopoly over the

means of violence. Africa's erstwhile strongmen revealed themselves to be emperors without clothes. Street protests led to multiparty reforms of varying degrees of transparency, while warlords led popular rebellions from the countryside to topple Cold War dinosaurs such as Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko, Somalia's Siad Barre, and Liberia's Samuel Doe.

Besides these external sources of conflict, Africa's post-independence leaders have also contributed to conflicts on the continent. Approaches such as crafting federations and conceding autonomy to minority groups were rejected by many nation-builders, who argued that one-party states were the only means of avoiding destabilising ethnicity-fuelled wars and preserving the unity needed to build their nations. Ghana, Guinea, Tanzania and Kenya were some of the early pioneers of monopoly politics. Ethno-regional differences were also exacerbated by nepotism and favouritism in appointments to military, political, and bureaucratic positions. The state became a cash cow to be milked for political patronage. Urban bias in development policies further created an aggrieved countryside filled with a ready army of unemployed youths who have since become the cannon fodder of Africa's ruthless warlords.

The end of the Cold War also left security vacuums in Africa that regional organisations have attempted to fill. But the inability of African soldiers and mediators to defeat the ambitions of local warlords has often led to efforts to include them in peace agreements. The appeasement of warlords and the power-sharing arrangements that have been reached in countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, and Angola have proved

As the Cold War ended, the West abandoned African autocrats who had served as reliable clients



The legendary South African singer Miriam Makeba with a portrait of Dr Kwame Nkrumah, who befriended her during her years in exile. Miriam Makeba Collection/PictureNET Africa

to be largely unstable. Peace agreements should therefore not simply restore the *status quo ante bellum* and the structures that led to the conflict in the first place. Inclusive institutions must still be built and grievances corrected to ensure durable peace in Africa.

UN commission

Peace-building, if effectively undertaken, can help to avoid costly military interventions through the early prevention of conflicts. The UN reform process of 2005 backed the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission within the UN secretariat in New York. The commission intends to improve UN post-conflict planning, focusing particularly on establishing institutions; ensuring funding in the period between the end of hostilities and the convening of donor conferences; and improving the co-ordination of the activities of UN bodies and other key regional and global actors.

The standing organisational committee of the commission comprises 31 members from the UN Security Council; its Economic and Social Council; and the largest contributors of troops and funding to UN peacekeeping. Meetings are attended by representatives of the World Bank, IMF and other institutional

donors. Angola was elected as the commission's first chair, while Burundi and Sierra Leone are the first countries being examined in a process that started in September 2006. A multi-year standing fund is to be established from voluntary contributions. However, based on experiences of UN interventions in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Central African Republic (CAR), many Africans are sceptical about the commission and its activities, and feel that it will not mobilise resources on the scale required for effective post-conflict reconstruction.

The AU and NEPAD are also developing a continental post-conflict reconstruction strategy. Their approach stresses the interconnection of the security, humanitarian, and development aspects of peacebuilding, and promotes the local 'ownership' of peacebuilding processes tailored to the specific circumstances of individual countries. Against this background, we now turn our attention to the ten prophets of *Pax Africana*.

Ali Mazrui, one of Africa's foremost theoreticians of peace-building and intervention, declared in 1967 that '*Pax Africana* asserts that the peace of Africa is to be assured by the exertions of Africans themselves'. Mazrui's notion of 'continental jurisdiction' sought to legitimise the slogan of 'African solutions to African problems', as newly independent African states strove to keep the continent free of foreign meddling by Cold War-

riors. Mazrui distinguished between foreign interventions and intra-African interventions which, through his idea of 'racial sovereignty,' were regarded as more legitimate than those by outsiders. This was an African 'Monroe doctrine', inspired by the regional conflict resolution mechanism of the Organisation of American States (OAS) in Latin America.

At the time of the creation of the OAU in 1963, Ghana's founding president, Kwame Nkrumah, stood alone in calling for the establishment of an African High Command. His idea was to establish a supranational standing army, with all independent African states pooling their resources to advance the liberation of the continent and to protect the continent against foreign intervention. This implied that the force would protect the black victims of albinocracies in southern Africa. The OAU's leaders rejected Nkrumah's ideas and sought instead to freeze the colonially inherited map of Africa, stressing the inviolability of borders and seeking to entrench their own positions behind the shield of sovereignty.

Sovereignty as responsibility

In May 2007, Sudanese scholar Francis Deng – who had served as the UN undersecretary-general for internally displaced persons between 1992 and 2004 – was named the UN secretary-general's special adviser for the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities. He and other colleagues coined the idea of 'sovereignty as responsibility' in 1996, seeking ways to operationalise the idea in order to convince African governments to protect populations in danger within the continent's changing post-Cold War architecture. Africa accounts for half of the global total of internally displaced persons: 12.7 million in 20 countries. Deng argued that in situations of armed conflicts, countries were often so divided on fundamental issues of sovereignty and legitimacy – with some factions calling for external intervention – that the validity of sovereignty had to be judged by the views of the population rather than those of governments or warlords.

Building on ideas such as Deng's 'sovereignty as responsibility,' then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change adopted the ideas of the 2001 Canadian-sponsored International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) – co-chaired by Algeria's Mohamed Sahnoun – on the 'responsibility to protect'. This doctrine holds that, if governments are unwilling or unable to protect their citizens against serious harm, the international community has a duty to do so, ignoring the principle of non-intervention for a higher goal. In the post-Cold War era, prominent African statesmen began to give prominence to the idea of a 'responsibility to protect' on the continent.

Nelson Mandela is perhaps the most famous proponent of this concept. An educated middle-class lawyer from a royal Xhosa family and a cosmopolitan anglophile, this 'father of the South African nation' who had spent 27 years as a political

prisoner embodied his people's aspirations for a democratic future. Mandela, an iconic figure and winner of the Nobel peace prize, has been widely celebrated as one of the greatest moral figures of the 20th century. As president, he came to symbolise his country's racial reconciliation. His charisma helped South Africa's young democratic institutions to flower, and gave the country an international stature of which a former global pariah could never have dreamed. Mandela led peacemaking efforts in Burundi, the DRC, and Lesotho. During his presidency, South Africa largely shunned a military role out of fear of arousing allegations of hegemonic domination.

In what came to be known by some as the 'Mandela doctrine', South Africa's former president told his fellow leaders at the OAU summit in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in 1998: 'Africa has a right and a duty to intervene to root out tyranny ... we must all accept that we cannot abuse the concept of national sovereignty to deny the rest of the continent the right and duty to intervene when behind those sovereign boundaries, people are being slaughtered to protect tyranny.' Mandela courageously championed ideas around the 'responsibility to protect', though he was hurt by a bruising diplomatic battle after Nigeria's autocratic General Sani Abacha had hanged Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight Ogoni activists in November 1995.

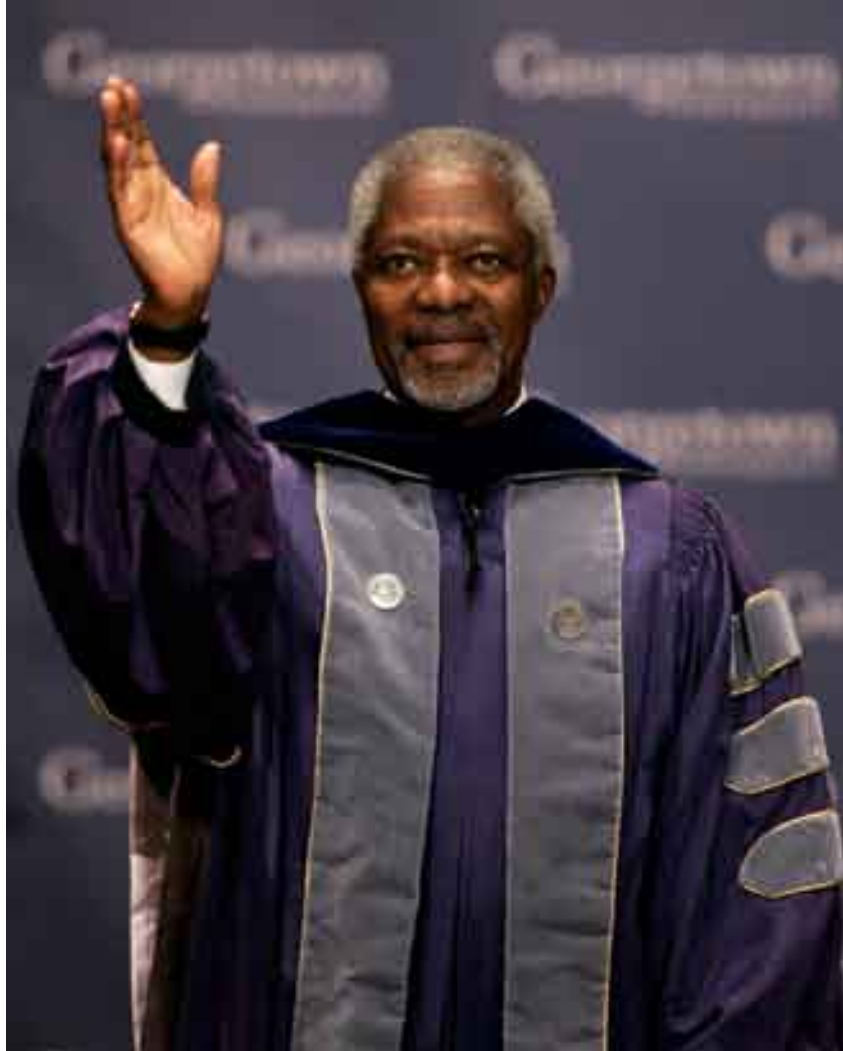
Tanzania's Salim Ahmed Salim, former OAU secretary-general and the AU's chief mediator in Darfur, declared: 'We should talk about the need for accountability of governments and of their national and international responsibilities. In the process, we shall be redefining sovereignty.' Salim regarded regional organisations as the 'first line of defence', and called on them to promote democracy, human rights and economic development. He also argued that 'every African is his brother's keeper', and called for the use of African culture and social relations to manage conflicts. In domestic disputes in parts of Africa, relatives and elders in local communities traditionally intervene even without being invited to do so. This was the sentiment that Salim was championing at the larger state level.

The former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan was perhaps the most visible prophet of the 'responsibility to protect' in the post-Cold War era, and was awarded the Nobel peace prize in 2001 – only the second UN secretary-general after Swede Dag Hammarskjöld to have won this honour. As Annan noted in 1999: 'States

Kofi Annan was perhaps the most visible prophet of the 'responsibility to protect' in the post-Cold War era

are now widely understood to be instruments at the service of their peoples, and not vice versa. ... Nothing in the UN charter precludes a recognition that there are rights beyond borders.' However, Annan's promotion of 'humanitarian intervention' was strongly opposed by many African leaders who feared that such an approach might be used to threaten their own sovereignty. Those who publicly criticised Annan's calls for humanitarian intervention included Abdelaziz Bouteflika, president of Algeria, and Theo Ben Gurirab, Namibia's former foreign minister.

This reaction was ironic considering that the AU's Constitutive Act of 2000 provides for one of the most interventionist regimes in the world in cases of genocide; egregious human rights viola-



UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan after receiving an honorary doctorate from Georgetown University in the US in 2006.
AP Photo/Haraz N Ghanbari

tions; unconstitutional changes of government; and situations that have the potential to lead to regional instability. Annan's commitment to humanitarian intervention might have stemmed from his own failure as UN undersecretary-general for peacekeeping to act decisively during the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

But it should be noted that military solutions can only be band aids for more complex and deep-rooted social, economic, and political problems, which armed peacekeepers can freeze but not resolve. External military power can only provide peaceful conditions under which warring parties can work out their differences. Creating viable institutions for managing conflicts and preventing them from becoming violent will still be necessary. Africa's civil society actors – women's groups, religious leaders, journalists, the business community, and academics – have therefore become more directly involved in efforts to promote local justice and national reconciliation; socioeconomic reconstruction; the reintegration of child soldiers into society; and the collection of information for early warning systems. They could provide a rich resource for a new *Pax Africana*.

The women of West Africa's Mano River basin have provided one of the most impressive examples of peacemaking in Africa in recent years. Liberia's Ruth Perry – a leading member of the Liberia Women Initiative – became Africa's first female head of state in September 1996 when she was nominated to oversee a transitional team of truculent warlords. She was energetic, skil-

ful and respected, and helped end a war that had dragged on for seven years, during which 13 peace agreements had been rendered dead letters. Similarly, in January 1996 a determined women's movement in Sierra Leone helped push a military junta out of power, paving the way for the 11-year democratic rule of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. Women's groups in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea – led by such impressive figures as Guinea's Sarah Daraba Kaba – also co-ordinated peacemaking efforts in a bid to calm the troubled waters of the Mano River.

Pragmatic prophets of peacekeeping

In his landmark report *An Agenda for Peace* (1992), Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the first African UN secretary-general, and our first pragmatic prophet of peacekeeping, argued forcefully for the use of regional security arrangements to lighten the UN's heavy peacekeeping burden. Boutros-Ghali launched peacekeeping missions into Somalia, Liberia, and Burundi, and castigated Western powers for focusing disproportionate attention on 'rich men's wars' in the Balkans while neglecting Africa's more numerous 'orphan conflicts'. During his tenure Boutros-Ghali displayed a fierce and often courageous independence, chastising his political masters in the Security Council for turning the UN into an instrument of parochial national interest over Iraq and Libya, and berating them for their lack of political will in

giving the UN impossible tasks in Bosnia and Rwanda without providing it with the resources to do the job. He relentlessly criticised Washington for refusing to pay its \$1.3 billion debt to the UN while still seeking to dictate its agenda.

Boutros-Ghali's tenure as secretary-general was not without achievements: UN peacekeeping successes in Cambodia, El Salvador, and Mozambique happened under his watch, and he forcefully defended his organisation against scapegoating by its critics. *An Agenda for Peace* remains an indispensable guide to the peacekeeping tools and techniques employed by the UN in the post-Cold War era. For all his achievements, however, Boutros-Ghali – a pompous pharaoh – earned himself the unenviable distinction of being the only UN secretary-general to have been denied a second term in office.

Since 1999, under Thabo Mbeki's presidency, South Africa has established solid credentials to become Africa's leading power. Chastened by Mandela's bitter foreign policy experiences over Nigeria in 1995, Mbeki has consistently sought multilateral solutions to resolving regional conflicts, and skillfully used a strategic partnership with Nigeria and his chairmanship of the AU between 2002 and 2003 to pursue his goals. Mbeki has been more prepared than Mandela to send peacekeepers abroad, deploying 3 000 troops in Burundi and the DRC as well as others in Darfur and Ethiopia/Eritrea, which has increased South Africa's credibility as a major geostrategic player in Africa.

Tshwane has been the chief mediator in Côte d'Ivoire and the DRC. South Africa was president of the influential Group of 77 (G-77) developing countries at the UN during key debates on UN reform in 2005, and currently holds a two-year seat on the UN Security Council through which it can champion Africa's peacekeeping interests: 60 per cent of the council's time is spent on Africa, while 80 per cent of the UN's peacekeepers are located on the continent.

Finally, *Pax Nigeriana* represents Nigeria's ambition to play a political, economic, and military leadership role in Africa or on issues related to Africa. To understand Nigeria's interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone between 1990 and 2003 – launched and maintained by Generals Babangida, Abacha and Obasanjo – one must also understand the self-image of Nigeria's military rulers. Many are profoundly concerned about their place in history, and some have even tried to write this history themselves. Yakubu Gowon, Emeka Ojukwu, Obasanjo, and the late Joseph Garba have all written books about their own experiences. Others – Babangida, Obasanjo, Joshua Dogonyaro and Yakubu Gowon – have had mostly laudatory biographies written about them.

The ECOMOG (ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group) interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone were consistent with the creation of ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States) in 1975, and Nigeria's military intervention in Chad between 1979 and 1982. More than 200 000 Nigerian soldiers have been deployed on peacekeeping missions, and the country has contributed troops to nearly 40 major UN and regional

peacekeeping missions in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. During the Cold War, a Nigerian intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone would have been unthinkable, due to strong American and British interests in both countries. In the post-Cold War era, however, Nigeria had become a restless giant in a volatile subregion in search of a role it had long sought to play but had often been denied. Liberia and Sierra Leone offered the country a chance to flex its subregional muscle, and Abuja made tremendous sacrifices in blood and treasure to bring peace to both countries.

Lessons learnt

In conclusion, four practical recommendations are offered for building peace in Africa. African leaders must establish more effective ways of monitoring their governance responsibilities. They must also learn the lessons of peacebuilding efforts in post-Cold War Africa in the areas of governance, security sector reform, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping.

First, a few well-governed African states should create an 'inner core' within the AU to enshrine term limits for heads of state in regional and domestic constitutions. Africa needs political and economic role models. Within the next decade, African leaders must establish an effective peer review mechanism which has some 'teeth', by devising a mechanism for excluding errant regimes from the African peer review process. Initiatives such as NEPAD and subregional governance protocols must be strengthened in the pursuit of these goals. African leaders shunned military regimes in Côte d'Ivoire and Comoros in 2000, and refused to deal with military putschists in Guinea-Bissau in 2003. Such trends must continue in line with the AU's stance against unconstitutional changes of regime.

Second, African governments and the international community must provide the resources necessary to restructure national armies. It is vital for future stability that truly national armies and police forces be created, built with equitable regional and factional representation, and enjoying

the confidence of national populations. The 'men on horseback' must also remain in their barracks, and must not be tempted to enter politics. Post-conflict governments need security forces that are capable of defending democratic institutions against internally and externally inspired threats.

Third, any successful post-conflict strategy must be subregional and take into account the interconnectedness of conflicts in Africa. Liberia's civil war spilled into Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea; subregional governments backed various warring factions; and, most significantly, warlords in Liberia and Sierra Leone assisted each other. The Congo war involved seven countries and a myriad of militias and mercenaries, and drew in Rwanda and Burundi to destabilise the Great Lakes region. Ways must be found to support regional bodies like ECOWAS, SADC, and ECCAS to channel resources to joint commercial and infrastructural projects which can link countries

Within the next decade, African leaders must establish an effective peer review mechanism which has some 'teeth,' by devising a mechanism for excluding errant regimes from the process



Then Nigerian president General Sani Abacha with Pope John Paul II during the latter's visit to Africa, March 1998. AP Photo/Jerome Delay

together to promote peaceful co-operation rather than violent confrontation.

Finally, regional peacekeepers and peacebuilders in Africa must be provided with the logistical and financial resources they need to achieve their goals. Events in Burundi, the DRC and Sierra Leone show that if external actors provide adequate resources and funds, and the parties to the conflict are willing to disarm, some success can be achieved. Though peacebuilding programmes have been developed in Africa to provide jobs for demobilised fighters and to reintegrate them into local communities, these projects have been mostly short term. Civil society groups must also be supported, since they can play an important role in reintegrating ex-combatants into their communities and mediating local disputes. The international community must dig deeper and increase the derisory amounts often dedicated to post-conflict peacebuilding efforts in Africa.

Working with institutions such as the UN Peacebuilding Commission, external donors must also show more understanding for the plight of cash-strapped governments in countries devastated by civil wars, such as Liberia, the DRC, Burundi, and Sierra Leone. Debts will have to be forgiven or substantially reduced – as is already occurring in some cases – while bor-

rowing restrictions and stringent aid conditionalities must be eased until these countries have recovered sufficiently from the ravages of war. More, not less, resources must still be found to nurse these international patients back to health. The golden opportunity to build peace in parts of Africa must not be squandered by the frugality of an indifferent international community and the recklessness of undemocratic African leaders.

Finally, it is appropriate to invoke the biblical saying: 'Blessed be the peacemakers, for they shall inherit the earth.' In their own way, our ten prophets of *Pax Africana* have all exemplified this saying. God bless Africa!

This is an edited version of a presentation to a seminar entitled 'Reflections on Post-Colonial Africa: Towards Making the 21st Century an African One', held by the South African parliament on 25 May 2007 to commemorate Africa Day.

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Deadly triangle

A series of conflicts in the Eastern Sahel are threatening to turn into all-out war. **Timothy Othieno** unravels the intricacies of the conflict system in the region, and suggests how it might be defused



THE Eastern Sahel is a complex region encompassing all the countries between Chad and Somalia, and some adjoining states as well. Almost all these countries are caught up in an intricate and interrelated series of conflicts. Thus a study of this conflict system can also help to explain events in the Great Lakes, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia. However, this article will focus on the situation in Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic (CAR).

Recent developments in these countries are worrying because they amount to a low-intensity war that could deteriorate into a full-blown one. Between 30 March and 1 April this year, the Sudanese government reportedly helped members of

the Janjaweed militia to cross into Chad and attack villages in the eastern part of that country. The attacks, which targeted the villages of Tiero and Marena, home to some 8 000 people, left up to 400 people dead and more than 100 injured. A UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) team that visited the villages soon after the incident found decomposing bodies, evidence of mass graves, and hundreds of homes burnt to the ground. The Chadian government responded in kind by pursuing the Janjaweed militia into Sudan, using tanks and more than 200 vehicles. Seventeen Sudanese soldiers were killed, and an unspecified number of Sudanese villages destroyed.

Chad tried to justify its actions by

emphasising its right to defend itself against the Sudanese-backed militia. At the same time, a crisis is under way in the CAR involving the same protagonists – Chad and Sudan – but playing different roles. Sudan continues to support rebels in the north of the country on the grounds that the CAR supports the Chadian government and the Alliance of Revolutionary Forces of West Sudan (ARFWS).

This situation raises the spectre of multiple civil wars and insurgencies in Eastern Sahel, which could turn into a full-scale regional war. This article seeks to unpack the dynamics of this conflict system, with a view to proposing measures for resolving the emerging crisis.



An AU soldier gives bread to two women from the Kalma refugee camp outside the West Darfur town of Murnei, April 2007. They were raped, beaten and robbed by members of the Janjaweed a few hours later. AP Photo/Nasser Nasser

The Khartoum–N'Djamena confrontation is complicated by the fact that their countries are bound by deep cultural and tribal ties. The peoples of Chad and Sudan are maintaining these ties despite the conflict at state level. Ironically, when the Chadian president, Idriss Déby, first rose to power, he was supported by Khartoum. The Sudanese thought that supporting the Déby government would help them deal with instability and insurgency along the western border. However, as the Darfur situation worsened between 2003 and 2005, Chadian rebels took advantage of the crisis to launch an insurrection against Déby. From then on, relations between the two countries have soured progressively. As a result, anti-

Chadian rebel groups have moved into Sudan from where they are launching their attacks on the Déby regime.

Khartoum's support for the incursions of the Janjaweed militia into Chad is based on the Sudanese government's belief that the Chadian government supports anti-Sudanese forces in Darfur, more specifically the ARFWS (formed in January 2006 as a result of a merger between the two main Darfur groups), the Sudanese Liberation Movement, or SLM, and the Justice and Equality Movement, or JEM. The Sudanese government alleges that its Chadian counterpart is allowing the ARFWS to launch attacks from Chadian bases in return for its assistance in combating the rebels trying to overthrow

the Déby regime. Furthermore, Sudan perceives the Chadian Zaghawa (Déby's ethnic group) as aiding the Sudanese Zaghawa (who apparently form a large part of the ARFWS) in the Darfur region. Evidence supporting Sudan's allegations emerged in a Human Rights Watch report of May 2006 which quoted a senior SLM soldier as stating that '... there is a strong bond between Sudanese rebels and the Chadian military whereby if Chad is attacked, we are obliged to respond'.

The key motivating factor in this linked conflict is ethnicity. The anti-Sudanese rebels operating from Chad come from the Zaghawa, who form the core of the Chadian government and national army.

In response to Chad's actions, Khar-

toum has overtly supported Chadian rebels seeking to overthrow the Chadian government, notably the Union Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD), an Arab-dominated movement led by a former Chadian defence minister, Mahamat Nouri. The UFDD is an umbrella rebel group comprising the United Front for Democratic Change, the Democratic Revolutionary Council, and the Union of Forces for Progress and Democracy. The other major Zaghawa rebel group is the Rally of Democratic Forces (RAFD) led by Déby's twin nephews, Timan and Tom Erdimi (former director of Déby's civil cabinet and chief of the oil and cotton sectors in Chad respectively).

Ruling elite

However, the RAFD is a Zaghawa dissident group, which suggests that the Zaghawas are not necessarily united. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the RAFD has emerged from Déby's ruling elite. Divisions arose over power-sharing, the need to accommodate

other political players in the government, Déby's about-turn on an agreed reform agenda, and his attempts to stand for a third term.

However, it is debatable whether the Chadian rebel groups are motivated by any real political programme or just the pursuit of political and economic power using ethnic and traditional rivalries – that is, between the Zaghawa (Déby's ethnic group) and Arabs, between non-Zaghawa groups, and within the Zaghawa themselves, who are seeking to replace a weak Déby (who has not been able to effectively deal with domestic dissent and Sudan) with a stronger one able to place the Zaghawa in power in Chad.

On 3 May this year, Sudan and Chad signed a ceasefire agreement which was brokered by Saudi Arabia. The agreement was aimed at halting the low-intensity conflict along their 1 000km border, and committing both parties to restraining themselves from supporting rebels in each other's territories. However, it is not clear how the ceasefire and other aspects of the agreement will be implemented

and monitored. Given that many previous agreements between Sudan and Chad have failed, observers are pessimistic about its prospects of success.

In fact, evidence of renewed conflict is mounting. Déby seems to be rearming himself for a final offensive against the Chadian rebels in the eastern part of Chad. According to a Chadian political analyst, Dr Mahamat Hassan, Déby has recently purchased large quantities of arms, including tanks and aircraft. In addition, large numbers of Chadian troops have been deployed along the border with Sudan. Although the Chadian army is weak and fractious, Déby will almost certainly rely on the support of the ARFWS rebel alliance in this offensive.

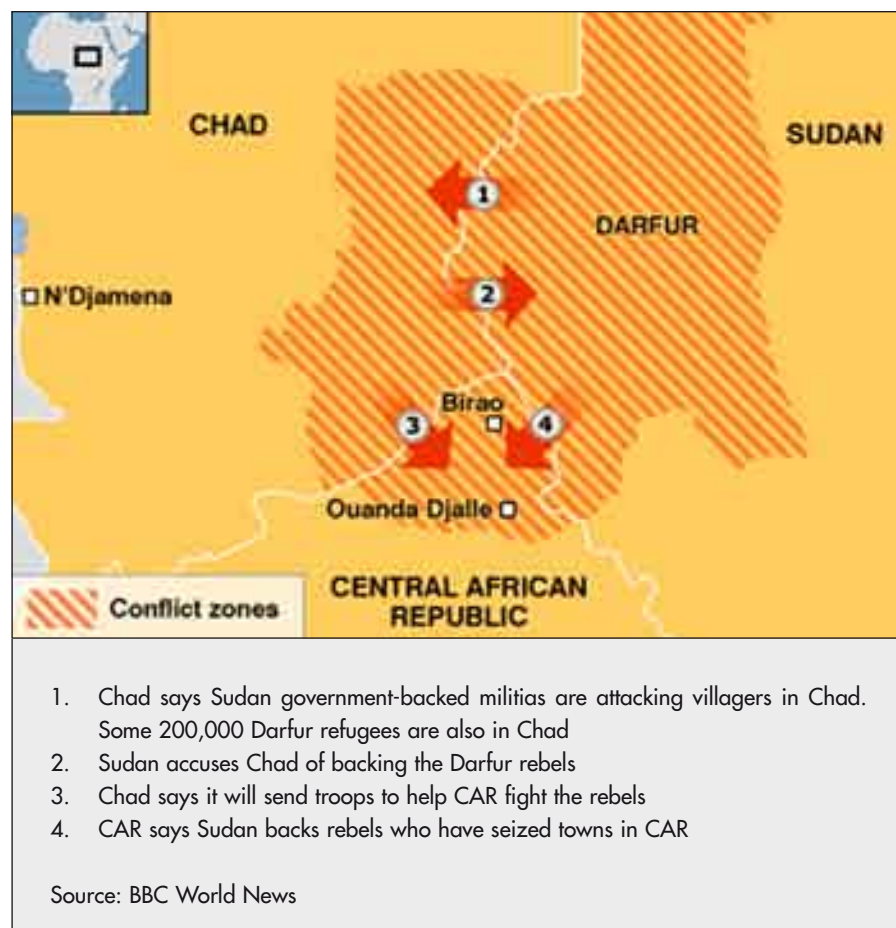
A final complicating factor in the region is the role of France, Chad's former colonial power. The French government maintains a force of more than 1 000 troops in Chad, and has done so for some time. These troops are providing 'logistical, intelligence and air support' to the Chadian government in return for a base in the territory. Paris is using the base to maintain its influence in the region, and protect its access to Chad's oil.

To complicate matters even further, the conflict in this region not only involves Sudan and Chad but also the CAR.

Although the situation in the CAR is fanned by the conflict in Chad and Darfur, the root of the crisis in this country is extreme poverty, and allegations that, since assuming power in controversial circumstances, President Francois Bozize has favoured southerners over northerners, failed to uphold democratic commitments, failed to implement promised political and economic reforms, and dishonoured the power-sharing agreement made when he assumed office.

As a result, rebel groups – notably the Union for Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR) and the Popular Army for the Restoration of the Republic and Democracy (APRD) – have begun to operate in northern parts of the country. These movements are backed by Khartoum, and the Chadian government is helping Bozize to contain them.

The UFDR comprise elements of ex-Bozize fighters and operate from the north east, while the APRD is made up





Above left: President Jacques Chirac, left, welcomes his Chad counterpart Idriss Deby before talks at the Elysée Palace in Paris in September 2006 ... the role of France is a complicating factor in the region. AP Photo/Michel Euler. **Above right:** Rebel leader Mohamed Bashir Ahmed at a meeting of Darfur rebel groups in Arusha, Tanzania, in early August, aimed at preparing for peace talks with the Sudanese government. One prominent rebel leader boycotted the talks, and at the time of going to press the outcome was still unclear. AP Photo/Frederic Roy

of supporters of ex-president Patasse, and operate from the north west. Bozize has been severely weakened by the rebellion in the north and now has little authority outside the capital, Bangui. Meanwhile, Khartoum says its support for the CAR rebels groups is justified because the Chadian and CAR governments are supporting the Sudanese rebels in Darfur.

Khartoum wants to destabilise Bozize in order to deal with the south-western front in its conflict with Chad. To turn the conflict into a triangle, Chadian rebels are also operating from bases in northern CAR. Déby is helping Bozize to deal with the CAR rebels in the hope that their joint military forces can also eliminate the Chadian rebel bases in CAR territory.

The crisis in the CAR is further complicated by the presence of France. In terms of a 2003 accord between Paris and Bangui, France maintains a force of 300 troops in the CAR, whose main purpose is to defend the government against the rebels. Indeed, the French troops have

helped the CAR government to recapture northern towns from the rebels.

Tripartite crisis

This tripartite crisis has led to indiscriminate violence across the region. Factionalism within and between the governments and rebel groups is helping to fan the conflict, as players in the three states jostle for power. Thus far, more than 120 000 people have died. According to the UNHCR, there are 150 000 refugees in the CAR and 218 000 Darfur refugees in Chad, while 2.5m more people have been displaced within Darfur. This anarchic situation has also driven thousands more to seek refuge in Southern Sudan, to the dismay of its government, which is facing enormous pressures on its financial and human resources in dealing with the refugees.

Both the AU and the international community have an obligation to save the region, and the UN needs to deploy

peacekeepers to separate the warring parties while a settlement is hammered out. It needs to be acknowledged that the current situation in the Eastern Sahel is a direct result of pent-up discontent and a lack of development in Sudan, Chad, and the CAR. Solving the situation in Darfur alone will not resolve the broader conflict, or address its underlying causes. In any case, given the multifaceted rebel activity in their own territories, Chad and the CAR are too weak to resolve the Darfur crisis on their own.

Lastly, the role and influence of France in the region needs to be examined. While, in some ways, France has perpetuated the crisis, French troops have helped to contain the conflict and prevent a complete explosion. Therefore, another issue the international community needs to address is how France can be turned into a change agent in this triangle of conflict.

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Managing the China–Africa interface

Garth le Pere outlines steps the AU and African governments should take to regulate and improve the continent's burgeoning relationship with China

FEARS about China's growing engagement with Africa are exaggerated. While there are legitimate concerns about how this relationship should be managed, the phobias about China's impact on Africa are largely products of Western-inspired hypocrisy and arrogance that are increasingly being echoed by Africans themselves.

History shows that European and American policies in Africa were characterised by a mixture of exploitation, aggression, hubris, injustice, and oppression; organised mostly for economic gain; and buttressed by political expediency rather than ethical restraint. The imperative of coherent policy responses towards China by Africa must therefore not fall prey to lazy caricature and crude stereotyping, lest we fall into a trap of moral relativism with the West being held to one set of standards and China to another.

Complementarities

Indeed, in contrast with the perceptual prism and deficit model of the West that views Africa mostly in terms of a looming apocalypse characterised by chaos, conflict, poor governance and underdevelopment, for China there is rich cultural and ethnic diversity, social dynamism and popular energy, vast development synergy and, of course, great opportunities for business. It is the complementarities in needs and resources that are propelling the burgeoning relationship between China and Africa, and against which an appropriate African response must be fashioned. China has about one fifth of the world's population, yet only 7% of its productive land. Hence oil, timber, and mineral resources that China lacks are vital to sustain its rapid economic growth and modernisation.

Most concerns about China's conduct in Africa centre on its 'no strings attached' approach and its permissive

policies which, it is claimed, support and strengthen undemocratic and repressive regimes, undermine the fight against corruption and good governance, weaken social and environmental standards, and could initiate a new cycle of debt and dependence. Let us examine some examples.

Sudan is often cited as the most prominent example of China's support for an undemocratic and repressive regime, and is the instance where its non-interference principle has been most criticised. China is the main investor in Sudan's oil exploration, chemical, and rail industries. It has sold arms to Sudan, and there are claims that these have been used to fuel the conflict in Darfur. China has also threatened to use its veto in the UN Security Council to scupper attempts to impose an oil embargo on Sudan. However, to China's credit it has urged Khartoum to allow UN peacekeepers into the country and has publicly urged it to accept an AU/UN hybrid force, to which it has now agreed.

Nigeria is also becoming a challenge, since Chinese oil workers have become targets of the militant Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, which

Sudan is often cited as the most prominent example of China's support for an undemocratic and repressive regime

wants to see greater redistributive justice in oil revenues and reparation for decades of environmental destruction. There obviously needs to be more engagement and political dialogue at the AU level to establish how China can be more supportive of the continent's democracy, good governance, and human rights agenda in a way that does not compromise its principle of interference in the internal affairs of member states. Indeed, there seems to

be a growing realisation in China that, over time, non-interference could prove inimical to and collide with its deepening interests in Africa.

China has ratified the UN Convention against Corruption, but this applies more to its domestic regime than its international economic activities. Chinese companies were the second-worst performers on Transparency International's 2006 Bribe Payers' Index of the world's 30 most important exporting countries; in other words, they were rated as the second most likely to bribe senior officials in partner countries.

In September 2006, and mindful of what was taking place in Angola, an AU task force examined Chinese investment practices in Africa, and focused on financial transparency and combating corruption as key elements of Africa's evolving partnership with China. Angola is the other country where China's trade practices have come in for sharp scrutiny, and where its large oil investments have allowed the government to evade international pressure to strengthen accountability and transparency in its oil sector. Human Rights Watch claims that between 1997 and 2002 a startling US\$4bn in Angolan oil revenues were siphoned from public coffers. A concessional loan of US\$2bn from China's Exim Bank gave Angola the space to ignore the clamour from donors and international agencies to improve its good governance record.

China's Export-Import Bank, which is largely responsible for financing its Africa projects, does not have an official policy on corruption, and has no mechanism for ensuring that the projects it finances are free of corruption, more so since these are not subject to international competitive bidding. The OECD's Action Statement on Bribery and Officially Supported Export Credits could be a useful model in this regard. China is aware of the problem, and it is encouraging to

note its commitment at the November 2006 Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit in Beijing to ensure that its African projects are in line with international best practice and principles of fairness, equity and transparency.

The AU task force also raised concerns about China paying more attention to environmental protection in its investment practices. Concern has been expressed about the Merowe Dam project in Sudan, one of the largest hydropower projects currently under construction, with a planned capacity of 1 250mW. China's Exim Bank is providing half of the US\$1,4bn in multinational project financing. With a 174km-long reservoir and a surface area of 476km, the project will have severe social and environmental impacts, and already more than 50 000 people are being displaced from the fertile Nile valley to arid desert locations.

In this regard, it would again be useful for China and the AU task force to examine the OECD guidelines and practices embodied in its Common Approaches to the Environment and Officially Supported Export Credits. It contains very specific standards, benchmarks and measures for assessing projects that might have adverse environmental impacts. If China is not held to higher standards, the obvious fear is that there will be an environmental and social race to the bottom, since China will finance projects that Western agencies reject because of environmental and social concerns. Conversely, western financial institutions may use competition by Chinese banks as an excuse to lower their own standards. Nevertheless, and alive to the challenge, the action plan adopted at the 2006 summit enjoins China to give high priority to African concerns relating to environmental protection and sustainable development. Furthermore, China's Africa policy paper of January 2006 refers to active co-operation on climate change, water resources conservation, anti-desertification, biodiversity, and other areas of environmental protection. In this regard, monitoring at all levels and by all concerned actors becomes an imperative.

Another concern is China's vertical integration formula of investment, project operation, and business conduct in Africa. In terms of this formula, all



The president of the African Development Bank, Donald Kaberuka, opens the bank's annual meeting in Shanghai, China, in May this year ... phobias about China's involvement with Africa are exaggerated. AP Photo / Eugene Hoshiko

inputs – including management, project design, labour, material, components, and technology – originate in China, with no or very little local content. The dumping of cheap Chinese imports and the displacement of local products – especially clothing and textiles – has also aroused growing anti-Chinese sentiment, popular resentment, and antipathy across the continent. While Africans complain that China has not encouraged local participation, supported local business, or transferred technology and skills, the Chinese counter that they find it very difficult to identify appropriate African sources and partners for their needs, and that project completion and quality could be compromised in such a search. The cultural and linguistic distance also does not help matters, and the charge is certainly justified that burgeoning Chinese communities across Africa have become closed enclaves, insensitive to local custom, norms, and social practices.

China's response

China is aware of this increasingly negative image, and has started a process of establishing Confucius Institutes in Africa in an attempt to bridge the language, information and cultural divide. (Three such institutes already exist in Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa, and five more

are being planned.) Increasing numbers of Chinese visitors also help. With more African countries being accorded 'Approved Destination Status' by China, 10m Chinese tourists are expected to travel to Africa by 2020, compared to the 110 000 in 2005. Chinese companies have also been urged to be more conscious of their social and corporate responsibility, and Cheng Siwei, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress has even hinted that Chinese companies will be held to stricter codes of conduct and could face legal penalties where they are found wanting in respect of social responsibility, including adhering to local labour and occupational safety standards.

The National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Commerce, and business associations in China have also been seized with giving corporate social responsibility a Chinese character, and have been studying the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. As such, it has been proposed that all chief executives of major Chinese companies take courses on corporate social responsibility.

FOCAC forms the basis for managing the relationship between China and Africa across a range of strategic dimensions, and has proved its worth as a forum for codifying an increasingly complex and

rapidly expanding co-operation agenda and development framework. However, tensions and points of friction are emerging. An African response, which could help to strengthen and reinforce the essential underpinnings of the engagement, can therefore be crafted in the following areas.

Firstly, Africans need to make a greater effort to overcome obstacles related to language, culture, and racial bias – the so-called ‘yellow peril’ stereotype. Demonising China is not helpful; rather, Africans themselves must become better cultural ambassadors, and engage more effectively with Chinese diplomats, businessmen, technicians, labourers, doctors, peace-keepers and tourists. The religious and civil society interface could also be very helpful circuits, since religious and civic bodies in Africa have a wide range of networks and extensive linkages within and among societies. They also exercise strong opinions on matters of public interest. Civil society can also play an important role in socialising and sensitising China to governance and accountability imperatives in Africa. It has expertise and experience across multiple sectors, including election monitoring, independent media, human rights, and the empowerment of women. The NGO sector could play a leading role in establishing China–Africa friendship societies.

Secondly, African countries must insist that donor activity in Africa be harmonised in such a way that international and bilateral donors systematically share data and develop complementary approaches with China. China has signed the 2004 Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness which, among other things, calls for improved alignment between donors and the development policies of aid recipients. Chinese spokespersons are also increasingly referring to helping Africa meet the MDGs, and this is another arena that invites closer multilateral co-operation.

There is mounting concern that China’s unconditional lending practices may increase the debt burden of African countries, thus undermining Western strategies for debt relief. This fear is largely unfounded, but Washington is particularly concerned about Africa’s borrowing patterns and their possible impact on the

long-term effectiveness of the Highly Indebted Poor Country debt relief initiative, which has thus far only delivered nominal gains. At the continental level, the AU should insist on deepening the US–China regional subdialogue started in 2005 as a means of addressing rising American concerns about China’s role in Africa with regard to Darfur, debt, energy competition, business practices, and relations with autocratic regimes, in a way which ensures that Africa does not fall victim to yet another power rivalry.

Extractive industries

Thirdly, African governments and NGOs should urge China to participate in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). EITI was initiated in 2003 and aims to ensure that revenues from extractive industries contribute to sustainable development and poverty reduction. There are now 20 resource-rich countries in the world that actively support and implement EITI principles and guidelines, and 14 of these are in Africa. EITI also enjoys the support of other western governments, multinational companies in the extractive sector, industry associa-

African ownership of the FOCAC process must be deepened and enhanced lest it be seen as a Chinese Trojan horse

tions, international organisations, NGOs, and major institutional investors. China’s participation in EITI would significantly enhance the legitimacy of its extractive activity in Africa, and align it with the desire of many African energy- and resource-rich African countries to fight corruption and promote greater transparency.

Fourthly, and closely linked to this, African governments need to improve their own regulatory frameworks and policies for business, investment, environmental protection, and labour relations. China is simply pursuing its national interest, and is acting rationally and pragmatically in seeking business and investment opportunities where these exist. China cannot be blamed or held accountable for the absence of appropri-

ate regulatory mechanisms, poor governance, and inadequate administrative systems in Africa. It is the responsibility of African governments to monitor Chinese business practices by, for example, ensuring that competition laws and policies are in place to prevent the abuse of market dominance and uncompetitive practices which many Chinese companies stand accused of. Moreover, strategic sectors such as energy, infrastructure, communications, fisheries, forestry, and mining require extra vigilance in management, judicious regulatory oversight and governance practices. Therefore, at the country level, there is a growing need for African-initiated empirical research and analysis to better understand what China is doing, build local competences for doing so, and stimulate public debate.

And, finally, the time has come for the AU task force to explore with China the need to establish a FOCAC secretariat in Africa or a similar high-level co-ordinating body to guide and implement the increasingly complex mix of ambitious policy and programmatic initiatives in the China–Africa political, economic, social, and development co-operation agenda. Importantly, regional economic communities such as SADC and ECOWAS must engage more actively with this exercise and must develop regional mechanisms that complement and support the continental strategy.

In short, African ownership of the FOCAC process must be deepened and enhanced lest it be seen as a Chinese Trojan horse. This will give African leaders and civil society a greater say in shaping the level and nature of China’s engagement; it would help to better identify priorities and targets in China’s ambitious assistance goals and economic aspirations. It would also help to give greater legitimacy and transparency to Chinese policies through more regular consultations with its African counterparts, and provide third parties with an appropriate institutional interlocutor and channel to initiate and co-ordinate collaborative activities in Africa.

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Will AFRICOM be good for Africa?

IN February 2007 the US president, George W Bush, announced the creation of a new US Africa Command (AFRICOM), to be operational by September 2008. He declared that the new command would strengthen US security co-operation with Africa, and help to bolster the capabilities of its partners in Africa. In the previous edition of *Global Dialogue* (volume 12.1, April 2007), **Michele Ruiters**, a senior IGD researcher, argued that, despite the extravagant promises of US policy-makers, AFRICOM was likely to have a negative impact on host countries and the continent as a whole.

Below we publish the views of Theresa Whelan, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Africa, who argues that the intention is to 'create a command that is as unique and diverse as Africa itself'. We are also inviting readers to participate in this important debate. Should you wish to comment, please submit your response (of 250–350 words) to Brendan Vickers at brendan@igd.org.za by 28 September 2007, for publication in the next issue of *Global Dialogue*.

Why AFRICOM?

Theresa Whelan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Africa,
US Department of Defense

'This new command will strengthen our security co-operation with Africa, and help to create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa. Africa Command will enhance our efforts to help bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa.' – President George W Bush, 7 February 2007

'[Creating AFRICOM] will enable us to have a more effective and integrated approach than the current arrangement of dividing Africa between [different regional commands].'
– Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 6 February 2007

A FORMER US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) for African Affairs, James Woods, used to begin his annual presentation to US Army Foreign Area Officers (FAOs) by asking: 'Why is Africa important to the US?' The answers would range from the practical (natural resources) through the idealistic (people yearning to be free of dictators) to the altruistic (prevent disease and save lives from humanitarian disasters). According to Woods, while those were sound reasons, he wanted to draw the FAOs' thinking to the strategic level, so the answer was: 'Because it's there.'

This is a simplification, but Africa's place in the world cannot be overlooked. As the second largest continent in the world

– 11 700 000 square miles (22% of the world's total land area) with an estimated population of 690m people (roughly 14% of the world's population) – it is geographically and demographically important. It is economically important as well: by 2005 economic growth was averaging 5%, and there were tens of thousands of US jobs tied to the African market; Africa possesses an estimated 8% of the world's petroleum, and is a major source of critical minerals, precious metals, and food commodities. It is also politically important: of the ten elected members of the UN Security Council, three are elected from the General Assembly by African nations.

Africa's strategic importance has been reflected historically in ways that have sometimes been less than a blessing for the continent. It sits astride millennia-old trade routes; the possession of its resources and even its people have been fought over by many nations, both ancient and modern, a 'fight' which continues to this day, albeit in less stark terms than during the so-called 'scramble for Africa' in the 19th century.

The legacies of that colonialism continue to haunt the international community. There is perhaps a magazine or newspaper article written somewhere in the world every week that draws a parallel between what happened during the 'scramble' and the alleged maneuvering among modern powers for access to African natural resources, be they oil, minerals, timber, or fish.

Africa remains a rich, vibrant, and diverse place with an ever-increasing strategic significance in today's global security environment. President Bush's recent decision to establish

AFRICOM is a direct recognition of Africa's importance as well as a sincere hope that America and the many nations that make up Africa will continue to strengthen and expand partnerships to the benefit of all.

A command focused solely on Africa will have no impact on the sovereignty of African nations. In fact, AFRICOM's success will be contingent upon its ability to foster important friendships and effective partnerships with the many nations in Africa.

US military engagement on the African continent is not new. For many years African nations have worked with US government agencies co-ordinating humanitarian assistance, medical care, and disaster relief. We also have undertaken joint military exercises and training programmes to assist partner nations in the professional development of their military forces.

Africa's growing importance is the imperative behind the creation of a command focused solely on Africa. It is a command that will be like no other in US history. The intent is to create a command that is as unique and diverse as Africa itself. Doing so will require better integration of US government capacity-building efforts across the spectrum of US agencies. One of the Deputy 'Commanders' will be a senior-level State Department official. Other senior-level civilian representatives from numerous US agencies will collaborate to help African nations tackle the security challenges related to humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, disease, poverty, deforestation, building partnership capacities, civic action, and so on.

The Unified Command Plan

To understand the concept behind a unified command, one must understand the Unified Command Plan (UCP), and how the Department of Defense does business around the world. The UCP is defined as: 'The document, approved by the President, which sets forth basic guidance to all unified combatant commanders; establishes their missions, responsibilities, and force structure; delineates the general geographical area of responsibility for geographic combatant commanders; and specifies functional responsibilities for functional combatant commanders.'

The UCP is regularly reviewed and updated, and this includes, when appropriate, modifications to areas of responsibility (AORs) or command alignments or assignments. As of January 2007, there were nine Unified Commands, stated in law and the latest UCP. Five were regional responsibilities, and four have functional responsibilities. With the advent of AFRICOM, there will be six geographic COCOMs.

Following World War 2 the US adopted a new system of defence organisation under a single Secretary of Defence. The system established the US Air Force, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and new commands composed of more than one military service. These new 'unified commands' were intended to ensure that forces from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps would all work together.

The geographic areas come under 'Unified Commanders', who exercise command authority over assigned forces. The

Commanders are directly responsible to the National Command Authority (the President and the Secretary of Defense) for the performance of these missions and the preparedness of the command. The present division of Africa among three commands (European Command – EUCOM, Central Command – CENTCOM, and Pacific Command – PACOM) was driven by historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors. Responsibility for North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya) was assigned in 1952 to the European Command, given those nations' European cultural linkages and their perceived relevance to the increasingly important Middle East.

As the Cold War grew in complexity, and the US and Soviet Union manoeuvred for influence among the newly independent African states, the UCP was revised in 1960 to include Sub-Saharan Africa under the AOR of Atlantic Command (LANTCOM). Shortly thereafter, in 1962, a new command, Strike Command (STRICOM), was formed and assumed responsibility for Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. Between 1971 and 1983, Sub-Saharan Africa was no specific Command's responsibility. STRICOM became Readiness Command (REDCOM) with a revised AOR that did not include Sub-Saharan Africa. It was not until 1983 that Africa was divided among the three commands.

In 1983 the UCP was again revised in order to recognise Africa's growing strategic importance to both the US and Europe in the context of the Cold War. European Command was given responsibility for all continental African nations save Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. These nations were seen as having closer ties to the Middle East, and were deemed Central Command's responsibility. This left island nations off the eastern coast (Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Comoros) within the Pacific Command; those off the western coast were assigned to Atlantic Command. This division, as one might imagine, led to difficulties in co-ordinating US activities, and thus gave rise to the first thoughts of creating a single, unified Africa Command.

With the end of the Cold War the strategic paradigm the US had used for nearly 50 years to understand and respond to the global security environment gradually became less and less relevant. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Africa, whose strategic importance to the US had been defined almost entirely in relation to US Cold War security objectives. In the absence of

the Cold War, US national security policy-makers in the 1990s struggled to understand exactly where and how Africa fitted in the security context. The initial answer was that Africa's security challenges manifested no direct threat to the US, militarily or economically (given the assumption that the collapse of the bipolar division of the globe would now allow free market-based access to world commodities) and were therefore relevant to the US primarily in a humanitarian context.

However, the events of 9/11, combined with 20:20 hindsight, made it clear that Africa was integral, not peripheral, to global security in general and US security in particular in the post 9/11 world. This was a world in which catastrophic

A command focused solely on Africa will have no impact on the sovereignty of African nations



Lieut Amy Peterson-Colwell of the US Army's 412th Civil Affairs Battalion inoculates a goat in a village in north-western Kenya. The battalion is based in Djibouti, home to the headquarters of a US-led task force leading the war on terrorism in eastern Africa. AP Photo/Karel Prinsloo.

threats to a nation-state's security were not simply confined to rival nation-states with the capacity to build large sophisticated conventional militaries with the means to deliver WMD. Rather, such threats could come from anywhere in the world, including from among the poorest, least developed, and least secure countries on the planet. If a small group of terrorists operating out of an undeveloped country in Central Asia could inflict more damage on the US in a few hours than the entire Japanese Imperial Navy did at Pearl Harbor, the US could no longer afford to prioritise its security concerns using traditional conventional power-based criteria. To further complicate matters, it became clear that non-state actors could now be just as dangerous as an aggressive state-based power, if not more so. In this post-9/11 world, African security issues could no longer be viewed as only a humanitarian concern. Cold, hard 'realpolitik' dictated a US national interest in promoting a secure and stable African continent.

Security and stability in Africa, however, are not merely a function of developing competent military and police forces. Experiences in Africa and the Balkans in the 1990s, and in Afghanistan and Iraq over the past five years, have made clear that those tools only provide security and stability on a temporary basis. Sustainable security and stability are dependent on

good governance, the rule of law, and economic opportunity. Those elements of security, in turn, have a symbiotic relationship with such things as health and education. If a secure and stable Africa were in the US national interest, then the US would need to take a holistic approach to addressing the challenge. Additionally, in the new, more volatile, fluid, and unpredictable global security environment, the old adage about an ounce of prevention being worth a pound of cure does not make sense simply from a resource perspective but also from a risk mitigation and management perspective.

Africom

It is in this context that former Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld asked his military and civilian staff to re-examine the merits and feasibility of establishing a stand-alone Unified Command focused exclusively on Africa. Africa's direct relevance to US national security demanded that the Department of Defence (DoD) rethink the Cold War-based structure that artificially divided the continent among three different commands that were frequently distracted by responsibilities in their primary geographic regions. Keeping Africa divided among three commands would mean that, at best, Africa would remain a second-

ary and sometimes even tertiary concern for those commands. As such, neither the commands nor the military services that supported them with personnel would deem it a priority to develop a large body of personnel with knowledge and expertise on Africa. It also meant that the bureaucratic barriers created by the 'seams' between the commands would continue to present challenges to coherent and efficient action in the areas where the 'seams' met.

The fact that the 'seams' ran through key areas of conflict and instability on the continent made them even more problematic. Additionally, the establishment of the AU and its ambitious programme for a continent-wide multilateral security architecture created further complications for DoD's command seams, as EUCOM found itself working more and more in CENTCOM's backyard in Addis Ababa with the AU. Further, both CENTCOM and EUCOM struggled to deal with emerging African standby brigade structures that cut across their respective areas of responsibility.

Beyond simply mandating a re-look at the way lines were drawn on the DoD map, the Secretary also directed that the effort involve members of the US government interagency, in particular the State Department and USAID, and that the team consider innovative organisational constructs as well as mission sets for a command dedicated solely to Africa. The former Secretary believed that if DoD was going to establish a command for Africa, it needed to be a 21st-century and not a 20th-century command, and needed to be tailored to address the unique security challenges of the continent.

Secretary of Defense Gates has since embraced the effort, stressing that the command should 'oversee security cooperation, building partnership capability, defense support to non-military missions' and expressing the importance of moving away from an 'outdated arrangement left over from the Cold War'.

The result of the inter-agency study team's work was a proposal for a Unified Command for Africa that would concentrate its efforts on prevention rather than reaction. Its primary objective would be to contribute DoD's expertise in the security arena in support of US diplomacy and development efforts to 'prevent problems from becoming crises, and crises from becoming catastrophes.' In that context, the command would help build the capacity of African countries to reduce conflict, improve security, deny terrorists sanctuary and support crisis response. In order to do this, the traditional military J-code organisation structure designed for combat operations would need to be fundamentally changed to incorporate an integrated civilian/military architecture that would emphasise and facilitate non-kinetic missions such as humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, medical assistance, civic action, security sector reform, military professionalisation, and capacity-building training. The study team also recommended that the command not be developed in a US vacuum but rather that the specifics of its mission, design and even possible location be informed by consultation with international partners. Particular importance was placed on consultation with African partners to insure that it would be appropriate to the African context. On 7 February 2007 President Bush publicly announced his direction to DoD to develop and set up



a Unified Command for Africa by the end of September 2008, based on the principles outlined by the inter-agency study team.

Myth vs reality

The AFRICOM development process has begun, as has the international consultation process. The next 18 months will see flesh put on the bones of the AFRICOM skeleton. However, there is already much uninformed and sometimes sensationalist speculation about the command which has led to numerous misconceptions, especially regarding its structure and purpose. In many ways, the creation of this command is an historic opportunity to 'catch up' with Africa's quickly evolving continental and regional security architectures and their increasing capacities to synergise African efforts in both the governmental and non-governmental spheres to address security challenges all over the continent. It is an opportunity to strengthen and expand US and African relationships in such a way that our combined efforts can help generate a lasting peace and stability on the continent.

There has been much speculation about the location of the command and the type of facilities that the command would require. Some believe the creation of AFRICOM means DoD will be establishing military bases for US army, navy or air forces on the continent. That is most definitely not the case. In the last seven years DoD has engaged in a major global force restructuring project involving the withdrawal of US troops from bases overseas. The creation of AFRICOM will not alter that process. Africa Command will be a staff headquarters, not a troop headquarters. Consequently, the intent is to establish staff personnel presence in locations on the continent that best facilitate partnership with African nations and institutions based on consultations with those nations and institutions. AFRICOM will not be accomplishing its mission if the physical presence of the command itself becomes a burden to host nations. For that reason, as well as for force protection considerations, the command footprint in any given location will likely be relatively small and discrete. As is the case currently, US military personnel involved in training or exercises in Africa would deploy to the continent from their home bases in the US for the duration of their training mission. Such mission lengths are usually measured in terms of weeks.

Who's in charge?

Another concern/criticism that has been raised about the establishment of AFRICOM is that it will attempt to usurp African leadership on security issues on the continent, or militarise US foreign policy in Africa. Neither assertion is true. With regard to leadership on the continent, DoD recognises and applauds the leadership role that individual African nations and multi-

lateral African organisations are taking in promoting peace, security, and stability on the continent. This is exactly the type of initiative and leadership needed to address the diffuse and unpredictable global security challenges the world currently faces. The purpose of AFRICOM is to encourage and support such African leadership, not discourage and suppress it. US security is enhanced by African nations being able to address and resolve emerging security issues in their countries, regions and across the continent on their own. It would be counterproductive for AFRICOM to take actions that undermine that goal. AFRICOM is intended to complement, not compete with, the AU. Its mission will be to facilitate the AU's efforts to develop the capabilities and mechanisms across the continent needed to promote and sustain peace and stability.

As to the militarisation of US foreign policy, AFRICOM will be the 'supporting command' not the 'supported command' with regard to US foreign policy on the continent. The creation of a single US DoD point of contact for Africa will simply allow for the better synchronisation and co-ordination of DoD efforts to help build security capacity in Africa with State and USAID efforts to improve governance and development capacity and opportunities. The inclusion of State Department, USAID, and other US government interagency personnel in the command structure will not change the traditional lines of authority in these departments, nor will it dilute or undermine their independence.

'It's about the oil ...'

Many pundits, both inside and outside Africa, have asserted that AFRICOM's primary purpose will be to secure US access to African oil. Much has been made of the fact that the US currently receives roughly 15% of its oil from Africa, and that percentage is projected to grow over the next five to ten years. That said, the US is far from the only beneficiary of African oil. Given the nature of the global oil market, African oil production is important to all oil-consuming nations. While Africa's growing importance as a global oil producer is certainly a factor in the continent's strategic significance, it was not, as has been explained previously, the rationale for the creation of AFRICOM. It would not, therefore, be AFRICOM's mission to provide security for African oil or, for that matter, any other African natural resource. Rather, AFRICOM will work to help African nations develop their own capacities to protect their natural resources to ensure that they are not illegally exploited and diverted, thereby undermining economic development potential while possibly fueling conflicts or even terrorism. If African nations have adequate capability to protect their own natural resources, then the global market system will be sufficient to insure international access to them as needed.

It is also important to note that oil is not the only natural resource worth protecting in Africa. The international press focus on African oil obscures the importance of other natural resources, particularly the more mundane, such as timber and fish, to African economic potential. For example, coastal African nations lose billions of dollars of resources annually to international illegal fishing. The extent to which AFRICOM

The five current regional United States Unified Combatant Commands (COCOMs). AFRICOM will add a sixth geographic COCOM to this number.

could help such nations develop maritime security capacities to protect their territorial waters could contribute to those countries' economic health, a key component of long-term stability. DoD's involvement in helping African nations protect these more environmentally friendly natural resources is not unprecedented. In the 1980s and early 1990s, there were several US security assistance programmes that focused on helping African militaries build the capacity to protect their fisheries resources, and even their game parks.

'Show me the money!'

So if AFRICOM is not going to base US troops, sailors or airmen in Africa, or secure and control African oil fields, then the question arises as to what exactly this command will look like, and what specifically the command and its staff will do. To begin with, AFRICOM, unlike existing US Unified Commands, will be structured and staffed so as to emphasise and facilitate security capacity-building and civil/military activities, the bulk of the command's mission. An initial working draft of the command's mission statement reads as follows:

'US Africa Command promotes US National Security objectives by working with African states and regional organizations to help strengthen stability and security in the area of responsibility. US Africa command leads the in-theater DoD response to support other USG agencies in implementing USG security policies and strategies. In concert with other US government and international partners, US Africa Command conducts theater security cooperation activities to assist in building security capacity and improve accountable governance. As directed, US Africa Command conducts military operations to deter aggression and respond to crises.'

This working draft mission statement places emphasis on what the February 2006 DoD Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) refers to as 'anticipatory measures'. In other words, AFRICOM's primary objective will be, as the QDR put it, to '... prevent problems from becoming crises and crises from becoming catastrophes'. Given AFRICOM's mission emphasis on prevention versus reaction, one of the most significant organisational structure innovations currently being developed for the command is the creation of a major command element called the Directorate for Civil/Military Activities. This element will be separate from, and equivalent to, the traditional operational element of the command. Further, for the first time, DoD will have a non-DoD civilian as a senior official in AFRICOM's chain of command. A State Department Senior Foreign Service officer will lead the Civil/Military Activities Directorate and serve as one of at least two deputies reporting directly to the AFRICOM Commander. This Civil/Military Activities directorate will be staffed by both military and civilian personnel, with a large percentage of the civilians coming from other US government departments and agencies such as the State Department, USAID, Treasury, Justice, Energy and Homeland Security, to name a few. European and African partner nations may also be invited to second personnel to this component of the command at some point in the future.

The new Directorate will oversee all of AFRICOM's capacity-building assistance at the bilateral and multilateral level.

Areas of focus will include security capabilities (both land and maritime), medical skills, command, control and communications, disaster relief, and security sector reform/restructuring (such as that being done in Sierra Leone, Liberia and DRC). In particular, the Civil/Military Activities Directorate will be the primary interface with the AU on developing ways in which AFRICOM can provide effective training, and advisory and technical support to the development of the African Standby Force. State Department leadership of, and presence in, this Directorate will also enhance AFRICOM's ability to support such State Department funded endeavours as the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) programme, a mainstay of the US effort to build peace-support operations capacity in Africa.

Additionally, the integrated approach AFRICOM will facilitate will allow DoD's various military exercise programmes in Africa, such as the African Endeavour communications exercise, the Joint Combined Exchange Training exercises, and the MEDFLAG exercises to be more effectively synchronised with African Standby Force development goals.

The Civil/Military Activities Directorate will also co-ordinate AFRICOM's modest humanitarian assistance and civic action projects, as well as HIV/AIDS prevention programmes with other US government agencies that have the lead in the development and health sectors. This type of co-ordination/co-operation has already proven effective in the Horn of Africa, where Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa has worked closely with USAID and regional African governments, responding to flood emergencies and conducting civic action projects such as digging wells and building schools in places where development agencies have identified critical needs. AFRICOM will build on this success.

DoD, working through EUCOM, CENTCOM, and PACOM, has existing programmes in many areas. AFRICOM will continue to execute those programmes and, over time, seek to use its leverage as a stand-alone Unified Command to gain additional resources to strengthen and expand them, as well as develop new ones to address emerging African security needs.

Importantly, an AFRICOM 'presence' in Africa (as opposed to a military base) is the means by which the Department of Defense can more easily consult with our friends on the continent, collaborate on important initiatives that promote security and stability, and learn from our African hosts about how Africans view their own challenges, opportunities, and remedies for helping the continent achieve its full potential.

Conclusion

The US both seeks and presently enjoys a thriving security, economic, and political relationship with Africa. We want to continue to build on that. The creation of AFRICOM has been a long time coming, but it has finally arrived at just the right time in history.

This is the text of a presentation at USAID in Pretoria, South Africa, on 12 July 2007, and is reprinted with permission.

Renewable energy: the pain and the gain

While renewable energy is still in its infancy, it has an important contribution to make to SA's energy security, writes **Saliem Fakir**

DURING the past three years renewable energy (RE) has received considerable attention from all quarters, and significant strides have been taken in SA at the policy level.

The main drivers behind domestic RE initiatives are the need to reduce greenhouse gases as well as utilise carbon finance; the latter is a factor because SA is a non-Annex I country under the Kyoto Protocol and therefore attracts funding as part of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) – a complementary source of finance for RE. SA has abundant sunlight, wind and biomass, which makes it hard to justify why we should not pursue RE. The increased oil price has also spurred countries to look at energy alternatives.

More importantly, the SA White Paper on Renewable Energy has created a vision for diversifying our energy base and ensuring our long-term energy security, and renewables are an important part of that energy mix. Energy security is derived not only from diversifying sources, but also from developing the knowledge systems needed to do things differently with new technology. This is another reason for getting into RE. There are therefore good strategic reasons for getting into the RE game: developing new knowledge, skills and industrial capacity, as well as protecting the environment.

The RE white paper sets a target of 10 000GWh of RE production by independent power producers (IPPs) by the year 2013. This target comprises a mix of RE energy sources: biomass, landfill to gas, solar, wind, mini hydro, biofuels, and others. Thus far there are a few projects, producing close to 100mW capacity, that are fully financed and generating RE-based electricity. But the development of



Solar panels and a wind turbine on a farm near Verneukpan in the arid Northern Cape.
Johann van Tonder/PictureNET Africa

RE projects in SA still faces many hurdles, both market and non-market in nature.

If committed investments are anything to go by, then investments in RE in SA are meagre when compared to the \$38bn invested globally in 2005 (up from \$30bn in 2004). A rough estimate puts current SA investments at close to \$300m. This does not include investments earmarked for biofuel and other projects, which are likely to shift the figure closer to the \$1bn mark. Current investments include solar companies, eight CDM-registered (UNFCCC) projects, individual investments in solar geysers, and other small-scale investments in co-generation, landfill-to-gas, small hydro, and wind power.

Globally, investments in renewable energy have increased rapidly, especially

over the past five years. Investments in biofuels increased by 50–100%, and those in solar photovoltaic cells by 55%. The biggest growth has been in biofuels, and solar and wind power. Reuters reports that, within a decade, China and India will boast the largest renewable energy programmes in the world, with China expected to invest \$200bn in this sector over the next 15 years. Both countries are competing for global dominance in this sector, and come at it from an energy security point of view rather than just an environmental one.

SA biofuels are estimated to meet 50% of the RE target, according to the National Biofuels Strategy. Though the actual cleanness of biofuels is being debated, biofuels have been identified as the best way of meeting the national RE target. Interestingly, they will meet only 4% of SA's fuel demand, so there is more at stake than biofuels' environment-friendly nature.

The first large-scale maize-to-ethanol plant in Bothaville is still struggling to get off the ground. Industry lobbyists are asking for more subsidies, and environmentalists have legitimately raised concerns about the impact of biofuel production on food security and the environment. Also, maize is not the ideal crop for conversion into ethanol because of its relatively high energy inputs compared to sugar cane, and because three to four times more fuel can be extracted from 1kg of sugar cane than from the same weight of maize.

So the verdict is still out on biofuels – in the US and Europe this sector is heavily subsidised, both directly and indirectly. The fact that the synfuel producer SASOL has made noises about biofuels but has done nothing concrete about it thus far reveals something about the

doubts making the rounds in the industry about the prospects for biofuels in SA. By contrast, SASOL has received government support running into billions of rands for a new coal-to-liquid project – dubbed *Mafutha* ('the big one') in Zulu – aimed at increasing SA's synfuel capacity by 80 000bpd.

Given the blood, sweat and tears involved in getting an RE project financed and working, the SA market is not highly conducive to small players starting out and becoming financially sustainable. Investing in RE requires deep pockets, as the risks are still high.

There is also a danger that RE may be crowded out by large and capital-hungry conventional power projects which are either on the table or have already been implemented by Eskom and the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs.

Investors may well be lured to these prospects because conventional power is tried and tested, with better security and returns on investment; big coal-fired and nuclear power stations soak up massive investments, but also provide substantial and stable returns, and investors eagerly throw money at these totems of human ingenuity.

What has and is still counting against the local RE market is the low price of SA electricity compared to international prices. However, it appears as if this honeymoon is over; tariffs are expected to increase by 5% to 6% a year, and Eskom itself, which now wants to finance its own large loan book, recently told the national electricity regulator that it wants to hike electricity prices by up to 18%.

This is good news for RE in the long term. However, factors unrelated to price or market continue to bedevil its prospects. One only has to ask the tenacious entrepreneurs who have undertaken the first RE projects in the country (such as the Darling Wind Farm Company and NuPlanet, which established the first mini hydro project in Bethlehem) about the difficulties they have encountered.

In both cases five to seven years elapsed before construction started, and each of these projects will only generate about 5mW or so. By contrast, a 1000mW gas-fired power plant only takes two to three years to start up. These capacity and

time factors weigh heavily against RE.

Ensuring successful RE project development entails jumping through numerous regulatory hoops, and lengthily negotiating power purchase agreements with municipalities. Moreover, projects cannot be pulled off without a mix of grants, carbon finance, soft loans, and investor equity.

These factors amount to significant transaction costs for developers – they need to engage with many institutions to get the required approvals, and lenders do not have specialised facilities for RE; at best they are dabbling in RE in the hope that they will catch the 'big fish'. A R100m project may require initial risk capital of R3–R5m before capital can be raised for the infrastructure and operating costs.

If getting these projects off the ground is such a headache, why are these small players risking all they have for the dream of RE? RE involves a historical battle between big power utilities and small power producers who, despite sound and encouraging government policies, often find themselves at the mercy of the

The SA market is not highly conducive to small players starting out and becoming financially sustainable

Machiavellian big players. Sometimes the big utilities play ball, and at other times, for no logical reason, they are seduced by the drug of power, which compels them to make life difficult for the small players.

So the tenacity of the small players can be ascribed to their dream of a better and sustainable future, as well as their desire to resist the big power utilities. We are lucky to have them, otherwise the big players would have long written off the value and merit of RE and convinced policy-makers that it makes no sense.

But bullying or harassing small players is not limited only to the RE sector; IPPs have also struggled to penetrate the conventional SA energy market despite the white paper's stipulation that 30% of future power should come from non-Eskom sources.

Elsewhere in the world, big players have not always had it their way; govern-

ment regulations have forced them to either invest in RE, or buy power from IPPs, and growth in RE in Europe and North America can be credited to the institution of forced obligations rather than voluntary mechanisms. The SA government is also looking into using regulation as a mechanism for promoting RE, specifically by introducing a top-up feed-in tariff.

Control over power – its generation, transmission, and distribution – also means real power for the major utilities. Big power utilities also have a habit of thinking big – both because of the nature of the sector, and because this is what large corporations tend to do – this paradigm also kills the growth of new ideas that are naturally associated with smaller players.

There is significant scope for small individualised RE investments that can be driven by households themselves, rather than big industry. Solar is one area where South Africa can do extremely well, given the many millions of vacant rooftops basking lazily in abundant, free sunlight.

Individual solar hot-water systems and even electricity generators have a growth capacity of 300%, but we need to do what other countries have done: adopt regulations obliging every household to install solar geysers, allow them to write off these investments against tax, grant investment tax rebates, and introduce a net tariff scheme in terms of which these small generators can connect with and sell excess power to the national grid. If solar takes off, the entire RE sector will benefit – a case of the proverbial domino effect. But mobilising citizens to generate their own energy is still a long way off.

Ultimately, the case for RE is not just about the environment; it's also about energy security, not only from threats from distant wars that may cut off our oil supplies, but also a sense of being free from the machinations of the big power players.

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Forging unity for the future of Africa and the African Diaspora

Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, SA Minister of Foreign Affairs

In January this year the AU decided to endorse SA as host of the Africa–African Diaspora Summit, to be held in early 2008, and it is in this capacity that we are undertaking international and national consultations. This conference is therefore part of a global consultative process in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, the UK, North America and Europe aimed at engaging civil society (and also governments, in the case of the Caribbean) in the African Diaspora in the run-up to the summit. Therefore, what brings us here today is a process of national consultation that should feed into the summit and produce concrete plans at the national level, so that, in practical and tangible ways, this gathering of minds can help to strengthen Africa and its future.

It is also the unity and solidarity of the continent and the Diaspora that are at stake. A very important discussion is taking place about the political and economic unity of the continent. We are also meeting while Africa and the Diaspora are celebrating the 50th anniversary of Ghana's independence. Moreover, on our continent and in SA in particular, there are a number of anniversaries, two of which are very special to us in this country. The first is the 40th anniversary of the death of Chief Albert Luthuli, president of the ANC, and one of the first Nobel Peace Prize winners on the continent. The second is the anniversary of the 90th birthday of the late O R Tambo.

These two people contributed to the unity of Africa throughout their lives. We hope that many of you, especially the intellectuals, will look at their lives, and show how they enrich the present. They were both teachers, comrades in arms, and contributed to where we are today both as a country and a continent.

The discussion today should also contribute to what we can do for the unity of



Edited version of an address
to the National Consultative
Conference on the African
Diaspora held at Misty Hills,
Johannesburg, on 17 April 2007

Africa. In July 2007 there will be a grand debate on how to strengthen our unity, politically and economically. Whether we opt for a continental government or not, I hope this debate will contribute to the ongoing debate, which must be put in its context and present relevance. Each debate must take us a step forward.

Proposed theme

The proposed theme of the 2008 Summit is, after all, 'Towards the Realisation of a United and Integrated Africa and its Diaspora', with the emphasis on the crafting of a shared vision of sustainable development for both the continent and the Diaspora. This idea of African political and economic unity is one that has

recently resurfaced, but we should see it in a more historical setting as well as in terms of its present-day relevance, since it has captured the imagination of Africans since the beginning of the last century.

The African continent was known as an epicentre of learning in the ancient world, with flourishing ports, communities, universities, palaces and cities. Of course, from time to time, the centres of trade and craft would shift as people moved around and migrated to other places. But this history of the African people was abruptly and radically changed with the entrenchment of an international slave system that condemned Africans to mere commodities. They were used as slaves and indentured labour to build the economies of countries in Western Europe and the US. So we recognise and pay tribute to the millions of Africans who were captured and taken under horrific conditions to a lifetime of slavery in the Americas, never to return to their homelands.

But we are also inspired by the transnational movements for emancipation, through the life work of individuals like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and others who fought for an end to slavery in the 1800s. We also take our inspiration from the earlier struggles of slaves, especially their successful revolt in Haiti which resulted in the establishment in 1804 of the first black Republic of San Domingo under the astute leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture. In the words of C L R James in *The Black Jacobins*, 'In him [Toussaint], born a slave and the leader of slaves, the concrete realisation of liberty, equality and fraternity was the womb of ideas and the springs of power which overflowed their narrow environment and embraced the whole of the world'.

It is this same desire for liberty, equal-

ity, and fraternity that Africans began to embrace everywhere they found themselves. Thus the shaping of an African identity could not be defined simply by referring to a common geography or a point of departure in the distant past. But it became a political identity, a consciousness of the struggles of the enslaved to free themselves, as well as the subsequent battles of Africans to liberate themselves from colonialism. The Battle of Isandlwana in 1879 also became a source of pride for Africans as demonstrating the possibility of an African defeat over the British Empire. Another was the success of the Ethiopians against the Italians at the Battle of Adwa in 1896. As a result, Ethiopianism gained support in Pan-African thinking and practices, and later also took root in Rastafarianism. All these strands allowed us to forge a common unity. For, as Ralph Ellison puts it, 'It is not culture which binds the people who are of partially African origin now scattered throughout the world, but an identity of passions.'

We pay tribute to all those Africans who, with great courage and passion, fought for our freedom from the beginning of the last century. We recall watershed moments in African thinking that shaped the direction of future struggles. We salute the efforts of W E B du Bois and Sylvester Williams in organising the first Pan-African Conference in London in 1900, which laid the basis for Pan-Africanism. We recall some of the objectives of this conference, which served to secure civil and political rights for Africans throughout the world; ameliorate the conditions of our brothers and sisters in Africa, America, and other parts of the world; and promote efforts to secure effective legislation and encourage our people in educational, industrial and commercial enterprise. Women were also active participants in this and subsequent events, with Anna Jones and Anna Julia Cooper both addressing the conference and serving on the executive.

Marcus Garvey

The ideas and work of Marcus Garvey, especially in the Universal Negro Improvement Association, and his 'Africa for the

Africans' motto took root in the thinking of Africans all over the world. Garveyism, as it came to be known, became a source of African pride, and boosted Africans' self-knowledge and self-esteem.

SA intellectuals such as Pixley Ka Seme, later a founding member of the South African National Native Congress (later the ANC), were also inspired by this movement. Seme's essay 'The Regeneration of Africa' provided a vision of Africa's renewal in line with Pan-Africanist thinking.

Later, the formation of the Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union (ICWU) and the work of trade unionists such as Clements Kadalie and others also gave momentum to the ideas that workers on

We pay tribute to all those Africans who, with great courage and passion, fought for our freedom from the beginning of the last century

the African continent could unite under one banner.

The post-World War 2 movements for African independence played a crucial role in forging African unity. Under inspired leadership, countries began to win their freedom. The words of Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of a free Ghana, at the celebrations of this country's independence still resonate 50 years later: '... the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up to the total liberation of Africa.'

The formation of the OAU in 1963 was an important step towards realising Nkrumah's goal. At the founding of this organisation were leaders like Julius Nyerere, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Sekou Toure, Modibo Keita, Haile Selassie, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Leopold Senghor, to name a few. They envisaged a free and united Africa in which the common good would prevail, and the African personality would occupy pride of place.

It was in the spirit of internationalism and with the desire for a free Africa that the OAU supported SA national liberation movements for many decades until a free and democratic SA was achieved. The liberation of SA also received strong support from the countries of the Caribbean and

from Africans all over the world in the global anti-apartheid movement which fought for equality, justice and freedom for the SA people.

With the liberation of SA in 1994, a second wave of democratisation swept the African continent, although the struggle for economic, social and cultural development remained. Then President Nelson Mandela, speaking at the OAU summit in Tunis in June 1994, announced: 'Finally, at this summit meeting in Tunis, we shall remove from our agenda the consideration of the question of apartheid South Africa. ... Where South Africa appears on the agenda again, let it be because we want to discuss what its contribution shall be to the making of the new African renaissance.' Later, his successor, President Thabo Mbeki, would give greater clarity to the African agenda and the need for rebirth and renewal. He emphasised the important connections that would link us inseparably to an African Diaspora as we sought not only to develop the continent, but also to improve the conditions of Africans and people of African descent all over the world.

The formation of the AU came partly out of the recognition that the conditions now existed for the realisation of African potential. NEPAD became a flagship project of the AU, a concrete developmental initiative about what Africans can do together to take charge of their destiny. As part of the process of renewal, the OAU/AU held two major OAU-Civil Society Conferences in 2001 and 2002 to forge a partnership between the OAU/AU and civil society in promoting peace, security, development, human rights, and democracy on the continent. The second conference included representatives of the Diaspora.

Conference of intellectuals

In recent years, across the African continent and in the Diaspora, there have been concerted efforts to bring together the finest and brightest minds that our intellectuals have to offer in order to advance African development and creativity. In July 2006 the international conference of

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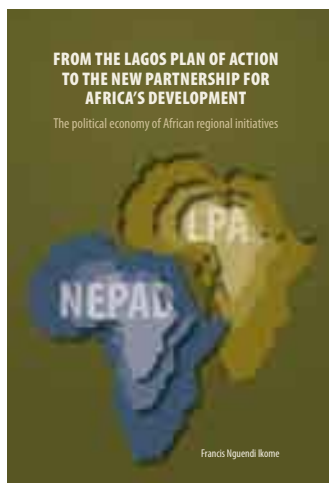
From the LPA to NEPAD

Vishwas Satgar reviews a new book which places two key African regional initiatives in a political-economic and historical perspective

IN a recent search of the National Research Foundation's database I found only five studies related to NEPAD. This is a dismal figure, and points to a lack of commitment by SA academics to understanding this country as part of a dynamic and changing continent. In this regard, Ikome's book makes an important contribution. It not only challenges this indifference, but also attempts to convey the importance of understanding, through a comparative political-economic and historical perspective, the making of regional initiatives – notably the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and NEPAD – by Africans themselves. Policy-makers, academics, students and politicians will learn something from this book for this reason alone.

By historicising the LPA and NEPAD, Ikome places before us a long view of post-colonial regionalisation on the continent, and the particular contextual factors that shaped the most important attempts to change its political economy over the past three decades. Ikome's book thinks with the regionalisation process, specifically, the LPA and NEPAD. This breaks with the typical against literature emanating from civil society, including some academics, about NEPAD.

Moreover, NEPAD itself is premised on a historical silence. The NEPAD document does not help us to understand its place within historical attempts at regionalisation, and hence obscures the importance of learning from Africa's past. Ikome's book fills this gap, and brings out painful insights about why African states failed to ensure genuine ownership and implementation of the self-reliance development strategy of the LPA. However, with regionalisation becoming a salient feature of most world regions (eg NAFTA, the EU, MERCOSUR, and so on), and the current debate about a 'United States of Africa' further entrenching this focus on the continent, the intellectual currency of Ikome's book within Africa's search for a



From the Lagos Plan of Action to the New Partnership for Africa's Development: The political economy of African regional initiatives
Francis Ikome
Midrand: Institute For Global Dialogue
(2007)

new regionalism is bound to increase.

However, for all these important reasons it is necessary to question his perspective. First, his theoretical universe begins and ends with the state. He works within a neo-realist straitjacket, drawing largely on Clapham (although adding a new institutional economics aspect) in characterising the insecurity and survival imperative as an inherent structural feature of the interstate system on the continent, and informing the behaviour of the African state. Hence the explanations he provides for the failure of the LPA, for instance, are all state-centred. The state is an important actor in Africa, but even if the state is capable of changing its behaviour – given the necessary incentives – it is shaped, formed, and influenced by the social relations of production it is embedded in. If we are to understand Africa and regionalisation, then, we have to go beyond the orthodoxy of a state-centric analysis. By itself a state-centric approach to Africa privileges in a paradigmatic way

and reproduces in reality a narrow problem-solving emphasis: the African state has to be fixed ('locked in', etc), and all else will follow. This might be necessary, but is not sufficient to confront the challenges facing Africa's new regionalism.

Second, Ikome's historical framework places the LPA and NEPAD in two separate contexts marked by important global developments. For example, the emergence of the LPA is attributed to asymmetrical trade structures and principles, the unbalanced nature of North-South relations, and dominant development ideas. Similarly, it is argued that NEPAD emerged through contextual determining factors on the continent and at an international level. While these historical factors all help to explain the emergence of these two instruments, Ikome misses the importance of the shift, since the accumulation crisis of the early 1970s, from an international to a global political economy, and how this global restructuring process has placed both the LPA and NEPAD at a common conjuncture.

Neoliberalism

As a result, Ikome's analysis does not deepen our understanding of neoliberalism as an ideology and accumulation strategy, or of transnational capital, and how this has been reorganising Africa (state forms, class formation and state-civil society relations) and its relationship with the global economy over the past three decades. While the analysis recognises NEPAD's neoliberal paradigm, and its break with the self-reliance paradigm of the LPA, it does not bring NEPAD's particularities into relief in the context of Africa's post-Cold War and post-apartheid political economy.

However, these quibbles do not take away from the importance of Ikome's book and the need to engage many more

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Big African states

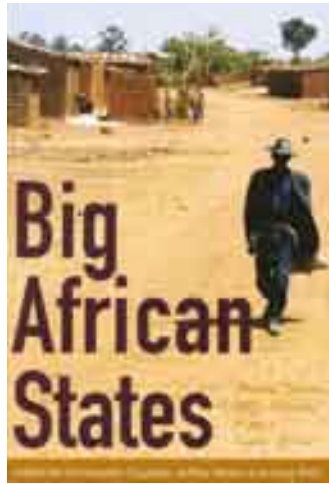
Che Ajulu reviews a new book that examines whether size hampers or improves the developmental performance of some big states in Africa

THIS BOOK challenges the assumption in political analysis that bigger states have a better chance of developing than small ones, and seeks to understand why Africa's largest and therefore presumably most important countries have performed so poorly in developmental terms. To contextualise the broader problem, the book introduces the notion of 'dysfunctionality' as a prism through which the countries are examined. As the title suggests, the book includes case studies of six African countries, all in the top five in terms of population, land mass, or both.

In their introduction, Herbst and Mills define dysfunctionality as 'the lack of provisions of welfare and opportunity to the population and excluding to a large degree South Africa, a sustained period of civil unrest, economic decline, state atrophy and social corrosion'. They also set out two important propositions in support of the dysfunctionality thesis: that the size of these states in itself creates governance problems, and that their size is also a problem for the neighbourhoods in which they are supposed to play a leading role. The first proposition attempts to establish a link between size and dysfunctionality, especially with regard to the inability of governments to deliver effective services nationwide. The authors argue that some administrative structures are often absent in significant parts of big states, and that parts of those countries are therefore completely neglected.

The second proposition identifies size as a threat to stability in the subregion which these states are supposed to lead. To emphasise this point, the authors refer to the Congo conflict and its impact on its neighbourhood. In general, they observe that large size may be a formidable barrier to addressing issues of state-building in Africa.

The book is organised into two parts; the first contains case studies of the six



Big African States: Angola, Sudan, DRC, Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa
 Edited by Christopher Clapman, Jeffrey Herbst and Greg Mills
 (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2006)

large African states under review. These chapters are all structured in terms of key factors that shape the functioning and cohesion of states, notably the history of state formation; resource distribution and allocation; the impact of ethnic diversity; leadership and governance; and the regional and international setting. Part two examines cross-cutting issues that affect all the big states – leadership, rebellion, lootable commodities and engagement with the international political and economic system – and concludes with some policy implications.

Ethiopia

In chapter 1, Christopher Clapman examines the problematic nature of the state in Ethiopia in the broader context of its constitution, which allows constituent nationalities to secede if they so wish. This, he argues, is exacerbated by the failure of successive Ethiopian regimes to devise a political formula that could secure the allegiance of different ethnic

groups. He concludes that the central problems of Ethiopian state dysfunctionality lie not so much with its size as with its culture. In chapter 2 Jack Kalpakian examines identity politics in the Sudan and the highly stratified religious and ethnic divides that have contributed to the weak foundations of the Sudanese state. There are similarities between this case study and the Ethiopian one, especially with regard to the secession of Eritrea and the likelihood of the secession of Southern Sudan.

Both these case studies point to the effects of poor leadership and the lack of a strategic response to state-building and forging a common identity. Kalpakian argues that, instead of building a common Sudanese identity, 'all three major Sudanese dictators (Abboud, Nimeiry and Bashir) found the temptation to use religious justification for their rule too strong to ignore'. This stems largely from the use of state power and religion to justify marginalisation and the control of national resources. Consequently, he concludes that equality among the various peoples of Sudan is meaningless unless some of the economic issues that also underlie the conflict are addressed.

In chapter 3, David Bach examines the governance quagmire in Nigeria, where public office has been exploited by various regimes to advance private pursuits and distribute patronage. According to Bach, the debilitating consequences of mixing federalism and a consociational system have caused major institutional decay and the erosion of state legitimacy. Similarly, in chapter 4, Claude Kabemba highlights the chaos that ensued in the DRC after independence, followed by a regime founded on kleptocracy, patronage, marginalisation and ethnic exclusion. Kabemba identifies the internal and external extraction and distribution of resources as a major source of tension, and argues that, in the absence of state authority in vast parts of the country,

the struggle over the control and extraction of resources has led to regionalised conflict.

For Greg Mills (Chapter 5), post-war reconstruction in Angola comes up against deeply entrenched 'structural, personal, ideological and policy obstacles'. He notes that Angola's economic wealth (oil and diamonds) and high levels of inequality expose the failure of the state to provide basic services to its people, and that a 'Bermuda Triangle' of actors exploit 'sources of government income through secret and complex accounting procedures'.

In Chapter 6 Tim Hughes defines dimensions of dysfunctionality in SA as persistent economic inequality, slow progress in land reform, endemic crime, and the lack of a structured state response to HIV/AIDS. One is left wondering whether these should be considered as policy challenges or elements of state dysfunctionality.

In part 2 Marina Ottaway (Chapter 7) examines how poor state capacity contributes to dysfunctionality, and encourages the formation of armed movements which result in the illegal exploitation of commodities, again using Angola and the DRC examples. Van der Walle (Chapter

8) argues that international responses to state dysfunctionality might have contributed to political stability but not the creation of strong and viable states. Herbst notes that geography is a determining factor of large states' ability to exercise monopoly over force, which invariably invites rebellion and insurgency (Chapter 9). As a result, control of the vast territory depends heavily on the state's ability to mobilise its armed forces relatively quickly in the face of a growing enemy threat. Gail Wannenburg (Chapter 10) points to the links between dysfunctionality and the proliferation of crime networks, and the relationship between abundant natural resources and levels of organised crime. She argues that organised crime becomes easily embedded in dysfunctional states. Joseph Ayee (Chapter 11) focuses on leadership typologies, and offers a comparative assessment of leadership styles in the six countries under review, with an emphasis on the challenges posed to leadership by the demands of governing large states. Garth Abraham sheds light on the contested African boundaries and the legal framework within international law that inform secession (Chapter 12). And, finally, Clapman (Chapter 13) pro-

vides some thoughtful policy options with a focus on internal, regional, and global dynamics.

In general, this is a very important contribution to the ongoing debate on state capacity and governance problems. It provides useful insights into the challenges of state creation, and its case studies challenge the conventional wisdom that bigger states perform better in provision of public services for citizens. However, the authors fail to systematically formulate and establish a palpable relationship between size and dysfunctionality. For instance, they provide a broad historical overview on ethnic diversity, marginalisation, politicised ethnicity, the struggle for control of national resources, patronage, and kleptocracy. These point towards political engineering and poor leadership, but fail to create a causal link between dysfunctionality and size. Moreover, challenges identified in these case studies are not peculiar, and generally apply to most African states irrespective of size. As a result, the book begs the obvious question of whether smaller states fare any better as far as these dysfunctional parameters are concerned.

Che Ajulu is a senior IGD researcher.

Book report: From the LPA to NEPAD – *Continued from page 41*

social scientists in the task of thinking simultaneously with and against Africa's regionalisation project.

We need a more ambitious intellectual project on the continent that complements the initiatives of states, classes, citizens and movements in shaping the

destiny of Africa and its effort to achieve development, peace, and thoroughgoing democratisation. Ikome's book provokes us into thinking about such a project, which could grapple with the 'big issues' facing Africa.

Vishwas Satgar is the executive director of the Cooperative and Policy Alternative Centre (COPAC), and a doctoral student in international relations at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Forging unity for the future of Africa and the African Diaspora – *Continued from page 40*

intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora was held in Salvador, Brazil, and two years earlier a Conference on African Intellectuals was held in Senegal. The SA government also organised the first SA, AU, Caribbean African Diaspora Conference in Jamaica in March 2005.

Conscious of the tasks that confront us today as Africans, we come together

with the same, if not more passionate, understanding and resolve than those of the generations that preceded us – and with the firm conviction that the future of Africa and of Africans depends upon us forging unity with our brothers and sisters in the African Diaspora.

We also bring with us a new consciousness that democratic spaces now

exist which can provide new opportunities for us to work together, carry out our dreams together, and succeed in our endeavours.

Let us hold this process of dialogue among ourselves, with a view to redefining and assessing the position of Africans and the African Diaspora in the world. We need to ask ourselves some fundamental

questions. These include (to paraphrase President Mbeki): What is the African doing consciously to free him/herself from the position of perpetual underling? What can Africans and the Diaspora do together to change their conditions and reclaim their pride and prosperity?

Among our fundamental concerns must be to create opportunities and possibilities for development partnerships between groupings on the African continent and in the Diaspora, and through public-private partnerships.

It is important that in our deliberations we continue to address the fundamental problem of poverty that afflicts the continent and large parts of our Diaspora. In Africa, the eradication of poverty is one of the most pressing challenges. Without assistance in this regard, Africa is unlikely to meet the objectives contained in the Millennium Development Goals. Evidence also suggests that there is a feminisation of poverty, with women bearing the brunt of poverty in both urban and rural areas. Economic empowerment is essential especially if we are to address the problem of the 'two economies', recently highlighted by our President.

Future African leadership

We should also look at ways and means in which Africa and the Diaspora can leverage their combined strength, expertise, experiences and resources to build their respective and collective economies. Our youths in Africa and the Diaspora are important because they constitute the future African leadership. Therefore, we must make a concerted effort to empower and support them. They must share and exchange knowledge, culture and history, and identify areas for concrete co-operation and exchange.

Projections suggest that Africa will have the largest population in the world by 2050. We have a normal population pyramid with a broad base at the low level and a narrow tip at the upper end, whereas Europe's pyramid is inverted, with fewer young people than older people. Unless we skill all our youths, the few who are skilled will be taken by the rich and the powerful. It is important to dialogue with the West so that they contribute to the skilling of our youth. It could

be part of our demand for reparation to ensure that they contribute to investing in our resources. If we do not, we will be worse off in 2050 than we are now. The migration issue in the West is about keeping the unskilled and poor out while encouraging the skilled to come in. We have to see to it that we are not enslaved in a different way in the 21st century.

This dialogue must also complement other global processes to engage the African Diaspora and to address its challenges, that is processes such as The Africa and Diaspora Conference on Cultural Diversity for Social Cohesion and Sustainable Development held in South Africa in August 2006.

We should utilise the various bilateral and multilateral fora available to us to advance the objectives of this dialogue. The agenda and outcomes of the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR), World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are particularly important and relevant for Africa and the African Diaspora. To this end, we should not shy away from using our numbers and collective strength in multilateral institutions such as the UN, CARICOM, MERCOSUR, the ACP, the NAM, the G77, the Commonwealth, and the OAS to push the agenda of the South.

Mary Seacole

I will end with the words inspired by another powerful woman, Mary Seacole, who lived from 1805 to 1881. Memorial services are held for her every year, and I am quoting from the one held last year: 'In taking up the baton, we have to make a serious choice, to be seen as assertive as Mary Seacole or let cowardice steal our voice. Formidable was this woman, as the annals of history have shown. As victims we must not be afraid to recount or relate the brutal agonies of hell endured in this environment of hate. Only those with hearts of stone will criticize and choose not to weep. The souls of murdered Africans cannot find peace. Neither can they sleep.'

If we want the spirits of murdered Africans to rest in peace, we have to ensure that present and future Africans are not enslaved.

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